

HARTLY HOUSE,

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C A L C U T T A.



D U B L I N:

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HARTLY HOUSE.

LETTER I.

Bay of Bengal.

THE grave of thousands!—Doubtless, my good girl, in the successive years of European visitation, the eastern world *is*, as you pronounce it, the grave of thousands; but is it not also a mine of exhaustless wealth! the centre of unimaginable magnificence! an ever blooming, an ever brilliant scene? And moreover, I have to inform you, that all the prejudices, you have so long cherished against it must be done away; and for this plain reason, that they are totally groundless. Yes, Arabella, the mother I have lost, and your so much lamented friend, felt not, as we

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have

have conceived, a victim to this ardent climate; her pulse was not suspended by exotic disease; the arrow of death was lodged in her gentle bosom *before* she left her native country, and she alone debarked, to expire on this coast. But take the melancholy fact, as my father was drawn out to relate it, during our voyage.

That the marriage of those to whom I am indebted for my existence was a marriage of affection, sanctified nevertheless by the approving voice of their parental relatives, is a circumstance you are well acquainted with; but, perhaps, it may be as new intelligence to you as it was to me, that from the tender distress mutually experienced on their first separation, in consequence of my father's profession, they resolved, on their re-union, never to separate more.

My birth gave them, however, a different turn of sentiment, though it in no degree lessened their conjugal attachment; my infant period being an insurmountable impediment to my mother's making an East India voyage, and my education a claim upon their feelings not to be dispensed with, until their confidence in the good understanding and excellent principles of your aunt at length persuaded them their personal superintendence

perintendance might, for a time at least, be safely intermitted; then the firmness with which my mother bad me adieu, astonished all who knew her.

The India fleet was detained in the channel by adverse winds; and in an excursion to Portsmouth, my mother caught a cold, which terminated in a cough. Yet did the extreme delicacy of her complexion, and uncomplaining turn of temper, prevent the discovery of a consumptive tendency, until it was too late to try the efficacy of softer climates than are to be met with in an East India voyage. She laboured, suffering angel as she was, to give her husband hope, even when she herself despaired; talked, in the most touching terms, of the treasure they had left in England; and when the pious fraud could no longer be kept up, died, conjuring him to live for my sake. But I will not dwell upon so heart-wounding a subject; I indeed cannot, Arabella, for it has unhinged me, and I must quit my pen for a few moments.

If the packet I sent you from St. Helena (which was the first opportunity that offered) was put

safely into your hands, or rather, if I could be assured that was the case, I might spare myself the trouble of accounting to you for what you call my wonderful departure from my native country; an epithet that surprises me not, when I recollect the incoherence and agitation with which I told the story of my approaching embarkation; but as I must remain for months uncertain whether it reached you or not, I will, on this occasion, give you the particulars of my motives and consequential conduct; for I love you too well to suffer you to suppose caprice, or the wild curiosity of seeing foreign sights had any share in my instantaneous resolution to visit the eastern continent.

Having attended my father, as you well know, to Deal, in order that we might enjoy each other's company to the last possible moment, I found, Arabella, on every renewed good-night we exchanged, irrepressible sighs escaped him.

The wind began to waver, and was expected to come round to the favourable point before the next morning's dawn. I was retiring, and the final farewell appeared to tremble on my father's lips; again I approached, and again, to embrace him. My manner unspeakably affected him. It

was

was nature's work; and when did nature ever work in vain?

He held me for a short space, with silent anguish, in his arms, and I could alone articulate, "My father!—my dearest father!" "Alas! Sophia," said he at length, "are my feelings prophetic; shall I never more behold thee?" "Oh, Sir!" cried I, "revoke, I conjure you, your own decree; nor be so cruel to yourself, when it is my anxious wish to accompany you, as to leave me behind."

He lifted up his eyes and hands; but made no reply.

I dropped instinctively on one knee before him. "My dearest sir, resumed I, if you persist in refusing my request, and I live not to welcome your return to England, can you charge the calamity on aught but your own fiat; for it is you, not Heaven, that forbids my sharing your destiny; or, should I survive you, do not flatter yourself the tidings of your dissolution could be supported by me; for who could convince me my presence might not have been soothing, or enable me to believe that somewhat of my suggesting might not have been salutary, and prolonged your
most

most valued life?—Your heart relents (perceiving I had subdued his resolves); I read it in your countenance; and I take upon me, short soever as the time may prove, to be prepared to go with you.” He laid his pocket-book open on the table, bad me use the contents without reserve, and, to hide his emotion, hastily retired.

With what alacrity and expedition I provided the necessaries for my voyage I need not mention; for who has not heard of the all-creative power of gold, and the rapid movement of the wings of inclination?

We embarked together, and have without one alarming (that is unusual) incident, made the bay of Bengal.—This letter shall therefore be constituted the repository of a private vow I have entered into with myself, never to marry in Indostan, lest it should become difficult, at some future period, to ascertain, my genuine impulse for quitting the country of my birth; a vow, take notice, Arabella, I will not violate to be a nabobess.

And thus concludes my last epistle, unanimated by oriental funs, and unperfumed by oriental breezes. An indescribable degree of
vivacity

vivacity already diffuses itself through my heart, infomuch that I hasten to tell you, in the cold language of European friendship (before I blush to have known its frigid influence) that I am your's affectionately,

SOPHIA GOLDBORNE.

LET-

LETTER II.

Hartly House, Calcutta.

THE splendour of this house, as it is modestly styled, is of itself, my Arabella, sufficient to turn the foundest European head; but I am well aware, was I to plunge at once into a description of it, I should have my veracity, if not my intellects, impeached: lowering myself, therefore, to your narrow conceptions, I will begin with the circumstances of my first arrival, and so contrive to temper, though I cannot, like Mr. Apollo, lay aside my rays, that your optics shall be enabled to contemplate, however brilliant, the dazzling objects I gradually open on your view.

The island of Sawger, at the mouth of the Ganges, is the first land you encounter; but as it is alone inhabited by tygers, alligators, &c. &c. you will believe me when I tell you I had not the smallest *penchant* for visiting it. Pilots, however, come down to this distance (some hundred miles) from Calcutta, for the safe convoy of ships; the
tide

tide of this eastern river being subject to no less sudden than impetuous changes, insomuch that the ablest seamen are often drifted by it.

We proceeded on our voyage up the river to one of the stations for Indiamen, called Culpee, 150 miles from Calcutta, where my father received the most affectionate greetings from his old acquaintance; and we were told, that three *bugeros* were on their way to welcome and accommodate us.

This found having no semblance whatever of the eastern dignity, I begged my father to inform me what a *bugero* was:—He smiled, and bid me wait their arrival, nor seek to anticipate my own discoveries in a single instance.

We next passed the second station, called Cudgerree; when lo, the *bugeros* appeared in view; and judge, if you can, of the pleasure it gave me, after having been so long confined to one set of company, to perceive I was on the point of tasting the boundless joys of eastern magnificence.

You have seen, as you suppose, some very handsome barges on the river Thames; but how

poor a figure the handsomest would make, in comparison with the *bugeros*, or barges of Calcutta, I will endeavour to convince you.

As they approached, my ears drank in the most delightful sounds; a band of music, as is the custom, occupied each of them, playing the softest airs; and from the *tout ensemble*, brought Dryden's *Cydus* and *Cleopatra* to my recollection.

The company in the first that came along-side of us were seated upon deck, with kittesans boys, in the act of suspending their kittesans *, which were finely ornamented, over their heads; which boys were dressed in white muslin jackets, tied round the waist with green sashes, and gartered at the knees in like manner with the puckered sleeves in England, with white turbans bound by the same coloured ribband; the rowers, resting on their oars in a similar uniform, made a most picturesque appearance.

My foolish heart was in the *bugero*, before my father, at the earnest solicitations of his friends, and a look of desire from me, assisted me to descend from the ship; but, when descended, my astonishment and delight so abundantly increased at each advanced step, that the European world faded

* Umbrellas.

faded before my eyes, and became *orientalised* at all points.

Eight gentlemen, three of whom were my father's particular friends, and four ladies, were the party; and it appears to me, Arabella, that I shall find every poetical description realised in this enchanting quarter of the globe; for be it known to you, in the language of Southern's Oroonoko, that when presented to the gentlemen as my father's daughter, I *bowed*, and *blushed*; and, if I have any skill in physiognomy, they *wondered* and *adored*; and such, I already understand, is the court paid to ladies at Calcutta, that it would be well worth any vain woman's while, who has a tolerable person, to make the voyage I have done, in order to enjoy unbounded homage.

The chief article of refreshment was claret, which was drank with great freedom, under the name of *Loll Shrub*. Coffee, tea, sweetmeats, &c. &c. were offered, but in general refused, except by my father, who is fond of coffee to a degree that I think will not accord with his health in this relaxing climate,

A kittesfan boy instantly took his stand behind my chair, and an attendant, called a Bearer, flew backwards

backwards and forwards in my service ; and in this state we reached Diamond Point, a place of debarkation, where we found a suitable number of Palanquins in waiting to accommodate us all.

I was startled, Arabella, however prepared, on finding myself hoisted on the men's shoulders ; for I need not observe to you, the only difference between a palanquin and a London sedan-chair, (except the travelling ones) is their having short poles fastened to the central part of the sides, the front pair of which have a curve for the bearers better hold—Venetian blinds instead of glass windows—and in the mode of carrying.

It was evening ; I therefore, as well as my father, and the rest of the company, had two harriers, or flambeaux-bearers, running before me ; and I felt all the dignity of my transition ; though I will confess to you, the *Tok, Tok*, their almost perpetual cry, to clear the way, did not fall so agreeable on my ear as I could have wished ; nor was I able to suppress the invocation of *aura veni* at every foot-step.

From the point where we landed, to the Esplanade, (a place I shall describe to you on my own acquaintance with it) is almost four miles ; and
swiftly

swiftly did we pass along ; for it seems these palanquin-bearers (with proper relays, as is the case with those that perform journies) are so expert that in defiance of the heat, &c. &c. they go at the rate of from nine to twelve miles an hour.

I could only observe by the light of the flambeaux (though a host of servants poured forth to receive us) that the entrance to Hartly House was by means of a double flight of stone steps, at the top of which we found a spacious balcony, called a veranda, covered in by Venetian blinds, and lighted up with wax candles, placed under glass shades, to prevent their extinction from the free admission of the evening breeze ; together with a couple of card-tables, furnished at all points, for those disposed to occupy them, with very many other polite *et cetera's*.

Here I met with new homage, in the form of congratulations on my safe arrival ; but recollecting it would not be to forfeit it in future, if I declined it at the then moment, I complained of fatigue, and was conducted to an apartment that would have satisfied a princess, though neither more nor less than a common genteel sleeping-room.

The

The furniture was all Chinese, of the elegant materials and manufacture of which, even you people in England have a very tolerable idea; but the vases and the perfumes were superior to every thing of the kind within my knowledge, and as such had a fine effect on my feelings.

My musketto curtains are made of beautiful muslin, extremely full, and capable of considerable expansion; and it is the custom for the servants to beat them immediately before going to bed, to clear them of those insects; when they are just sufficiently opened to admit the party, and suddenly closed to exclude those troublesome nocturnal companions; then, being spread out wide, they admit the air in the most refreshing degree. Apropos of muskettoes; I must tell you, though I shudder at the bare recollection of so vulgar a nuisance, that, in like manner with the bugs in London, they mercilessly annoy all new-comers, blistering them, and teasing, if not torturing them continually; and in a great measure spare those who are seasoned to the climate.

And now let me ask you your opinion of my attachment to you, when I can thus forego the highest earthly pleasures, flattery and luxurious accommodation,

commodation, for your amusement.—But perhaps, instead of thinking yourself obliged to me, you will, with the true European *sang-froid*, suspect me of self-gratification in my descriptions;—beware, however, of such erroneous conclusions, as you value the future favours of your own

SOPHIA GOLDBORNE.

P. S. We are, they tell me, (yet such is the present warmth, that, without the information, I should not have supposed it) arrived at the commencement of the temperate season, and I am taught to expect a very fine climate for five successive months, the monsoons not coming on until February, when agues and fevers are epidemic; and my constitution, no doubt, Arabella, must undergo its naturalization; for few indeed are the exceptions to these several attacks, which often lead down to final dissolution.—The idea shakes my constancy! Oh! pray devoutly with me, that my dearest father may be spared in his own health, and unwounded in mine; for well do I know he could depart in peace, if his child was not to be left behind.—And to survive her!—Can any thought be more killing? Good night!—I will try

try to lose it, and all my cares, in that sweet balm
of our existence, sleep. Once more, therefore,
good night !

you value the little things of your own

SOPHIA CORBONNI.

18. We are they who are (yet still) a the
greater within, that, without the mind, I
should not have perceived. I should not have
perceived of the presence of the mind, and I
ought to have seen the change in the mind.
five months, the mind does not come to rest
I cannot see a man and I cannot see a woman;
and my confusion, no doubt, is a great one.
the mind is a great one, and I should not have
seen it down to the bottom of the mind. I should
not have seen it down to the bottom of the mind.

LET-
my dear friend may be found in the mind,
and unwounded in mind; for well, I know he
will be in the mind, and I will be in the mind.
And to the mind, I will be in the mind.
I will be in the mind, and I will be in the mind.

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LETTER III.

————— Prime cheerer! light,
Of all created beings first and best!
Efflux divine!

IT is morn, you must understand, Arabella, with us sons and daughters of the East, six hours at least before you enjoy the glorious, however weakened sun-beams; and I awoke to encounter new wonders.

Having breakfasted, (which I find is the only *degagé* meal I must hope to enjoy, every one ordering what is most agreeable to their choice, and in elegant undress chatting *a la volonté*; whilst, on the contrary, dinner, tea, and supper are kind of state levees) knowing that in the next apartment to mine, a *country-born* young lady—as the phrase is to distinguish them from Europeans—was lodged, whom I had found extremely winning in her address during our voyage in the *bugero*, and declaredly ambitious to be admitted on the list of my friends; I took it in my head to visit her *en passant*,
and

and make her a morning compliment; and this the more particularly, because she had not given us her company at breakfast, and I imagined she might have taken cold on the water.—But judge my surprise, Arabella, when, on entering her chamber, I found her under the hands of her hair-dresser, actually smoking a pipe.

But let me caution you against every plebeian idea on the occasion, for that pipe was a most superb hooka, the bell filled with rose-water; and instead of odious tobacco, a preparation of the betel-root, rolled up, and wetted, was placed in the bole, which bole was beautiful china-ware, covered with a filligree silver cap, with a mouth-piece of the same materials.—Nor can I give you a conception of the graceful manner in which the snake (the long ornamented tube) was twined through the rails of her chair, and turned under her arm, so as not to have incommoded any person seated by her; or the genteel air with which she drew out the soft fume, and puffed it forth, alternately (for none of it is retained.)—In a word, I wished to have taken her portait on the spot, for her form is elegant, her complexion near the European standard, and the novelty of her attitude such, as rendered them altogether an admirable subject for the pencil.

This

This kind of smoking is, I am told, the characteristic custom of the *country-born* ladies; and the servant, dressed as I have already described, whose sole business it is to arrange the snake, feed the fire on his knees, and take care of the whole apparatus, is called the hooka-bearer, and is an indispensable appendage of eastern state and etiquette. The gentlemen, without distinction, indulge themselves this way, and as naturally, I am informed, fill up the period of their hair-dressing with their hookas, as those in England with perusing the daily prints, and unquestionably to a more beneficial purpose; for the health is preserved or promoted by the practice: whereas news-paper reading, in your fashionable world, only furnishes the head with politics, and the heart with scandal, no very estimable acquisition, I hope you will grant me, for a rational member of the community.

I have this morning enabled myself to give you some idea of the houses at Calcutta—for all of them, of any consequence, are, I am assured, built upon a similar plan, though not all with similar advantages of situation. To begin with

HARTLY

HARTLY MANSION.

The centre part of the building is much higher than the rest, and terminates in a point at the top, forming an obtuse angle (if I may properly so call it) when the projecting lines are downwards, and extend to the wings on each side; the roof whereof covers a most magnificent hall, or saloon, the whole length and breadth of this central space, ornamented at both fronts with balconies, or verandas, that open by folding glass-doors, of inconceivable grandeur, into the above-mentioned apartment; and the architecture, having the advantage of every possible decoration, (together with large-sized windows over the balconies) has a striking effect on an European beholder.

From this grand centre the wings project, each of which consists of a suite of elegant rooms, all on one floor—(for the utmost elevation from the ground is the flight of steps at the entrance) with a view of the esplanade in front, a kind of immense park; and a large garden, with a fine tank or fish-pond behind—such as sleeping rooms, dressing-rooms,

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rooms, withdrawing-rooms, &c. &c. in a style, no set of words I am mistress of can convey to your imagination;—and under this prodigious structure are the family offices in general; the exceptions are store houses, with the offices, at a distance, instead of gardens. The hall is, it seems, on all occasions, the place where dinner and supper are served up; and, when illuminated, as the lustres and girandoles bespeak, must be fit for the reception of a royal guest.

The outside of the walls is washed with a white composition, called *chinam*, that, in like manner with the scenes in your theatres, has no glare, and of course is not painful (how powerful soever the sun's rays may be) to the sight; which *chinam* is a pleasing contrast to the lively green of the verandas, or Venetian blinds, universally used, whether the windows are glass or not), and are reliefs to each other, but glass, you must know, is a dear commodity at Calcutta, and imported solely from England; on which account the governor's house is almost the only one that can boast that distinction.

The Venetian blinds (or *verandas*, as I shall accustom you to call them) answer two most desirable purposes—shade, and the free current of air, without

without which there would be no existing — Eastern pomp, splendor, and magnificence, support me in this trying moment ! when, almost expiring with heat, (and the seldom heard of, in Europe, misery of laboured respiration) I am on the point of confessing, no happiness can equal the happiness of a temperate climate, and the social intercourse of the sons and daughters of Liberty and intellectual cultivation ; for, my dear Arabella, too true it is, that the best pleasure of the East is, being a kind of state-prisoner, enfeebled and fettered by vertical suns, and the fatigue of veiling our distresses from vulgar optics, by gaudy trappings and the pomp of retinue ; nor can I suppose it possible, I should ever become habituated to what I now languish under, and cease to sigh for one delightful stroll in St. James's Park, unincumbered by palanquins, kittesfan-bearers, the clamour of harriers, &c. &c.

I reprobate all I have written.—My father has this instant filled my purse with gold mohrs, value forty shillings, or sixteen rupees, each ; has purchased me a palanquin (what prophanation have I not been guilty of against palanquins !) and my
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mind is restored to the pinnacle of grandeur, from which it had so meanly fallen.—I am nevertheless, in despite of myself,

Yours, as usual,

S. G.

LET.

LETTER IV.

'Tis raging noon, and vertical the sun
Darts on the head direct its forceful beams;
O'er heaven and earth, far as the ranging eye
Can sweep, a dazzling deluge reigns.

THOMPSON certainly passed a part of his life under this meridian, so applicable are the above lines to my present situation.—You cannot therefore wonder, if you give them an attentive perusal, at the weakness into which I was surprised at the conclusion of my last letter, or that the poet's words,

All conquering heat! O intermit thy wrath,
And on my throbbing temples potent thus
Beam not so fierce.

should at this moment spontaneously flow from my pen.—But we will talk no more of it.

The royal levee was never more crowded than mine—fine fellows, Arabella, without number!
—the

—the East India company's servants! the English sovereign's servants!—I trust I shall not dwindle again into my former self, or yawn away my days under your gloomy atmosphere.—But I wander wide from my intended subject.

I have been at church, my dear girl, in my new palanquin, (the mode of genteel-conveyance) where *all* ladies are approached, by sanction of ancient custom, by *all* gentlemen indiscriminately, known or unknown, with offers of their hand to conduct them to their seat; accordingly, those gentlemen who wish to change their condition (which, between ourselves, are chiefly old fellows, for the young ones either chuse country-born ladies for wealth, or, having left their hearts behind them, enrich themselves, in order to be united to their favourite dulcineas in their native land) on hearing of a ship's arrival, make a point of repairing to this holy dome, and eagerly tender their services to the fair strangers; who, if this stolen view happens to captivate, often, without undergoing the ceremony of a formal introduction, receive matrimonial overtures, and, becoming brides in the utmost possible splendor, have their rank instantaneously established, and are visited, and paid every honour to which the consequence of their husbands entitles them.—But not so your friend;

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for,

for, having accompanied my father to India, no overtures of that nature will be attempted, previous to an acquaintance with him, or at least under his encouraging auspices; nor did any gentleman break in upon the circle of my surrounding intimates, on this first public exhibition of my person, though every male creature in Calcutta, entitled to that privilege, bid Mr. and Mrs. Hartly expect an early visit from them.—On my mentioning the church, you will perhaps fancy I ought to recount to you its magnificence and style of architecture; but the edifice dignified at present with that appellation does not deserve notice. It is situated at the Old Fort, and consists solely of a ground-floor, with an arrangement of plain pews; nor is the governor himself much better accommodated than the rest; and of course the Padra, as the clergyman is called, has little to boast of; the windows are, however, verandas, which are pleasing to me in their appearance, independent of the blessing of air enjoyed through that medium.—But at the New Fort there is a new church erecting, on quite an European model, with galleries, a set of bells, and every suitable *et cetera*; the plan and foundation of which I have seen, conversed with the architect, and, from the whole, form very high expectations of the superstructure. One remark, however, is a-propos on this subject; namely,

namely, that the house of prayer, at Calcutta, is not the house of sepulchre. Burying-grounds are provided some miles from the town, which, I am given to understand, are well worth the visit of a stranger. I will only add, that though this measure may have arisen from the fervid heat of this climate (where death is busy) which gives the idea of rapid putridity, yet surely it is disgracing the temple of the Divinity, (admitting even that in England no bad consequence results from such deposits) to make it a charnel-house—Let this suffice for churches, except the mention, that at Calcutta, Sunday is the only day of public devotion, and that only in the morning; though the Padra's salary is liberal, and his perquisites immense.

Think you, Arabella, that on mentioning the awful repositories of the dead, I forget my dear mother's sacred remains?—Surely no.—But I wish not to hang unnecessary weights on your spirits, and therefore reserve all I have to say on that heart-searching subject, for the period that enables me to tell you, I have beheld her hallowed tomb, and paid the best tribute in my poor power to her beloved memory!—Adieu! adieu!—I will resume my pen the first opportunity; but can no more at present.

S. G.

LETTER V.

YOU would, my Arabella, be enraptured at the extreme neatness of even the meanest attendant; but besides the beauty and the virtue of cleanliness, it is the only fence in the East against putrid diseases. That unerring guide, Nature, who teaches the people of the North to fortify themselves with furs against their inclement seasons, bids the inhabitants of Indostan be correctly delicate in their persons, and personal attire: to which the circumstance of all the servants being Gentoos not a little contributes; for diurnal immersion in the river Ganges is one of the strict articles of their religion, at the same time that it is a general benefit to the Europeans.

The Moors, or Mahometans, and the Gentoos, compose the chief body of the public; but perhaps, Arabella, you may wish and expect I should present you with some account of the ancient inhabitants of this astonishing empire, before I introduce

roduce you to an acquaintance with the moderns, as the living generations may possibly be deemed by you.—You must, however, excuse me; historical anecdotes are not compatible with either the taste or leisure of a fine lady at Bengal. I will indeed advance so far on this heavy ground in your service, as to inform you where you may meet with such matter of fact, and spare myself the drudgery, as well as the disgrace, of exercising my pen thereon.—Yet, when I turn my thoughts that way, I must believe it will cost me less labour to write the little it is necessary for you to read, than to refer you to the chapter and verse of those authors who have treated of this world of wonders; for, in the first place, Arabella, take notice, the work of creation was performed in the East, and in the East Christianity received its birth; in consequence of which great circumstances, the sublime ideas and discoveries perpetually opening themselves upon my mind, can alone be even faintly conceived by you, if you, (as I recommend it to you to do) travel over so highly-distinguished a region, traced out as it is on your globes, with the sacred and prophane writers of antiquity in your hand—when your entertainment will be ample. I speak from experience.—The other particulars run thus:—

India,

India, it is supposed, was first peopled from Persia, (which, in conjunction with the Indian ocean, is its western boundary) because, by its contiguity to that kingdom, it lies in the way of Mesopotamia, where, it is generally agreed, the descendants of Noah settled after the deluge.—Be this as it may, it is evidently the southern division, (for there is not a white man, or any complexion but black, amongst its numerous inhabitants) and was possessed by the Ethiopians: their colour, long hair, and regular features being markedly different from the blacks of Guinea; and, as a further proof of their Ethiopian origin, we read in our Bible, that the queen of Sheba (which Sheba is only another name for Ethiopia) sent presents to the wise king Solomon, of many fine spices—which alone grow in India, and were brought thither from Ethiopia for cultivation.

The next people who possessed the country were Arabians; for certain it is, that almost the whole coast was subject to Arabian or Mahometan princes, when the Portuguese arrived there in 1500; which Arabs, there is held little doubt, dispossessed the Ethiopians of their territories, and drove them up into the midland country, which they still inhabit.

The

The next invaders were the Mogul Tartars under Tamerlane, about the year 1400, who fixed his third son in the North of India and Persia; but the Southern provinces were not reduced under the dominion of the Mogul, until the reign of Aurengzebe, in 1667. This prince, it seems, had been shewn some of the large diamonds from the mines of Golconda (the grand magnet at this day), and was thence induced to attempt the conquest thereof; and a good substantial motive it was; whereas the mighty Alexander overspread the universe with his armies, for the sole purpose of restoring, in the form of a generous act, those kingdoms his superior force wrested from their lawful and peaceful possessors.—But to return to Aurengzebe. He made himself at length master of all the country as far as Cape Comorin, which, if you look in your map, you will find to be the most Southern promontory of India; but the midland country being very mountainous and woody, and subject moreover to several Ethiopian princes called Rajahs, preserved, by their united efforts, their independence; insomuch, that they alone acknowledge the Mogul for their sovereign, at the present period, in instances you will meet with hereafter.

In the time of the famous Persian monarch, Khouli Khan, the Mogul throne was possessed by a great grandson of Aurengzebe, who was made prisoner by that bold and enterprising Persian, and obliged to cede to him all the north-west provinces of India, to obtain his liberty. This invasion cost the poor Gentoos two hundred thousand lives. As to the plunder made by Khouli Khan, well authenticated accounts speak it to be no less than two hundred and thirty millions sterling; his own private share of which was considerably above seventy millions, and may be considered as terminating the greatness of the Mogul empire in the house of Tamerlane: nevertheless, when he had raised all the money he could in Delhi, he reinstated the Mogul Mahommed Shah in the sovereignty, and returned to his own country.

A general defection of the provinces ensued, none being willing to yield obedience to a prince deprived of the power of enforcing it. The provinces ceded to Khouli Khan were only a short time enjoyed by him; for in 1747 he was assassinated, and Achmet Abdallah, his treasurer, equally unprincipled as his royal master, being a man of great intrepidity, found means, in the general confusion, to carry off three hundred camels loaded with wealth, and, putting himself at the head

head of an army, marched against Delhi with fifty thousand horse. Thus was the wealth, drawn from this powerful city, made the instrument of continuing the miseries of war, which it had at first brought upon them. At present, the imperial dignity is vested, after manifold revolutions, in a prince that is universally acknowledged to be the true heir of the Tamerlane race; but his power is feeble, the city of Delhi, and a small territory round it, being all that is left remaining to that ancient and magnificent house; and he depends upon the protection of the English, whose interest it is to support him, as his authority is the best legal guarantee.

The point of prudence, however, in the East India Company, is, that their Governors should interfere as little as possible in the domestic or national quarrels of the country powers; peace and tranquillity best promoting their commercial interests. The wars with the Marattas, and Prince Hyder Ally, indeed, prove, that these maxims have not always been properly adhered to.—But I do not intend to pass myself off for a politician; and, therefore, leaving these modern particulars undiscussed, affirm, that this is historical knowledge sufficient for any reasonable woman, who is in the way of receiving more extensive intelligence

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from

from incidental observation and hourly occurrences. But I must beseech you to keep these matters distinct in your head, that you may comprehend, on the instant, the references or elucidations I may present you with.

You will marvel at my reading and literary talents; but please to remember, that we alone know our depth of information or abilities, when occasion calls them forth.—I need not say how much I am,

Your's,

S. G.

LET-

LETTER VI.

THIS, Arabella, shall be a long letter; for it shall contain an account of one whole day, spent after the Calcutta manner; which, I conceive, will prove so close a copy of the general mode of living, that little more will be left for me to say on that subject; for the variations in amusement, exercise, &c. &c. cannot be considerable, in a place, where, to render existence supportable, is the sole end and purpose of elegance, as well as of industry.

At nine o'clock it is the custom of this family to breakfast; and I, who am no daughter of solitude, so soon as it is announced, become visible; for I have much pleasure in Mrs. Hartly's conversation.

The fashionable undress, except in the article of being without stays (and stays are wholly unworn in the East) is much in the English style, with large caps,

caps, or otherwise, as fancy dictates: it is, however, sufficient to say, no care or skill is left unexerted to render the appearance easy and graceful—a rather necessary circumstance, as you will grant me, when I add, that the gentlemen, in the course of their morning excursions (for they ride out on horseback at an early hour) continually drop in; and, from the numerous acquaintances this house can boast, I apprehend we shall seldom know a breakfast unaccompanied by these casual visitants—who say the prettiest things imaginable, with an air of truth that wins on the credulity, and harmonizes the heart.—Not, Arabella, but a fine woman, robed in white muslin, and with every other species of attractive drapery (let me tell you) is a very striking object, and, as such, honestly entitled to admiration.

You probably conceive, that, in this gay and enervating climate, industry is the last idea that would suggest itself to the mind of a fine lady: but you are mistaken; for the ladies at Calcutta are very fond of working upon muslin, of knotting, netting, and all the little methods of whiling away the time, without hanging weights on the attention.

At

At twelve a repast is introduced, consisting of cold ham, chickens, and loll shrub; after partaking of which, all parties separate to dress.

The friseur now forms the person anew; and those who do not chuse to wear caps, however elegant or ornamented, have flowers of British manufacture (a favourite mode of decoration) intermixed with their tresses, and otherwise disposed so as to have an agreeable effect. Powder is, however, used in great quantities, on the idea of both coolness and neatness; though, in my opinion, the natural colour of the hair would be more becoming: but the intense heat, I suppose, renders it ineligible.

At three the day after my arrival, as is usually the case, the company assembled in the hall or saloon, to the number of four-and-twenty; where, besides the lustres and girandoles already mentioned, are sofas of Chinese magnificence: but they are only substituted for chairs; what is called lolling, in the western world, being here unpractised.

The dinner table was covered with a snow-white damask table-cloth of the finest texture; and to every plate were arranged two glasses, one
of

of a pyramidical and slender form (like the hobnob glasses in England) for loll shrub, the other a common-sized wine glass, for whatever beverage is most agreeable; and between every two persons at table were also placed a decanter of water and a tumbler, for diluting at pleasure; with folded napkins, of equal elegance with the table-cloth, for all the company, marked by art with a variety of fanciful figures, which I reluctantly destroyed.

Such hosts of men on all occasions present themselves, that, at dinner, to the demolition of scandal and all other personal subjects, no two ladies are permitted, I find, in this country, to sit by each other. But the sexes are blended (I will not say in pairs, for the men are out of all proportion to the female world) so as to aid the purposes of gallantry and good humour; and, during the whole period of dinner, boys with flappers and fans surround you, procuring you at least a tolerably comfortable artificial atmosphere.

The dishes were so abundant, and the removes so rapid, I can only tell you, ducks, chickens, fish (no soup, take notice, is ever served up at Calcutta) and all the *et ceteras* of an English bill of fare, according to their proper seasons, passed before my eyes.

But

But the mode of dressing these provisions is somewhat curious; for, I am told, fires of a particular kind of wood are prepared, which being burnt to a clinker, the animal or joint intended to be roasted is placed *over*, not *before* them; where they are turned about until done in the greatest perfection; the fires being so judiciously fed, as to prevent both decay of heat, and smoke.

The attention and court paid to me was astonishing; my smile was meaning, and my articulation melody: in a word, mirrors are almost useless things at Calcutta, and self-adoration idle; for your looks are reflected in the pleasure of the beholder, and your claims to first-rate distinction confessed by all who approach you.

After the circulation of a few loyal healths, &c. &c. the ladies withdraw; and the gentlemen, I am told, drink their chearful glass for some time beyond that period, inasmuch, that it is no unfrequent thing for each man to dispatch his three bottles of claret, or two of white wine, before they break up; having the bottles so emptied piled up before them as trophies of their prowess.

The ladies at Calcutta retire, not to enjoy their private chat, or regret their separation from their admirers;

admirers; for to sleep is the object of their wishes, and the occupation of their time—a refreshment that alone enables them to appear with animation in the evening: accordingly, both ladies and gentlemen entirely undress, and repose on their beds, in the same manner as at the midnight hour; and, on awaking, are a second time attended by their hair-dresser; and thus, a second time in the twenty-four hours, come forth armed at all points for conquest.

But it shall not be concealed, Arabella; that so great an enemy to beauty is this ardent climate, that even I, your newly-arrived friend, am only the ghost of my former self; and however the lily has survived, the roses have expired: neither my lips (the glow of which you yourself have noticed) or cheeks are much more than barely distinguishable from the rest of my face, and that only by the faintest bloom imaginable. Art, therefore, is here (as well as in Britain) a substitute for nature in ninety-nine instances out of a hundred. I hope I miscalculate my countrywomen in this comparison; but you know me too well to suspect me of a departure from my established custom. Notwithstanding all which, from being a new figure at Calcutta, my father's partiality for his only child (the only child of a woman he adored) is gratified beyond

yond measure by the unending themes of my celebrity—my dress, my address, my judgment, my understanding, my language, my sentiments, my taste.—Fear with me then, my good Arabella, that I have cut out much distressing business for myself in the refusing line, by the rash vow I registered and transmitted you from Bengal Bay, and by which I religiously conceive myself bound to regulate my conduct.

I HAVE slept little this morning—A whirl of ideas, I was unable to regulate, was the cause.—I am, however, dressed; and my new friend calls upon me to attend her to the tea-room.—I come, I come.—She is gone without me, Arabella, from imagining me not ready to present myself; and I will borrow so much time as just to describe the household retinue of Mr. and Mrs. Hartly, and, of course, of all the genteel families in Calcutta.

The ranks of natives from whence the domestic servants are obtained, are Gentoos (I think

think I told you as much in a former letter ; but no matter, the repetition will only confirm my report) ; they do not board in the European families ; but, receiving a weekly stipend (and that a very slender one) feed at their own hovels, on rice and fish, during the hours of their masters and mistresses reposing themselves, and then, with renewed alacrity, resume their several appointments and offices.

The suite of servants consists of a coachman and groom, which are generally Europeans ; a consumer, who is a Gentoo (a kind of house-steward and butler, for he provides every family article, and attends the side-board and tea-table in person, with bearers, all Gentoos, of several denominations ; the chief of which is called the Seda-bearer, who cleans the tables, places the glass shades over the candles in the verandas, and has the care of his master's shoes, which he puts on and takes off for him with the profoundest respect) ; two pair of palanquin-bearers ; a kittesfan-bearer ; two harcarriers, or flambeaux-bearers ; a hooka-bearer ; and the bearers who stand behind chairs, and act as waiters to and from the tea-table : and so diligent and discerning are they, that they read the commands of the company in their eyes, and seem created for the
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sole purpose and sole ambition of serving the Europeans.

The muslin dresses, &c. &c. which I mentioned to you on the adventure of the bugeros, are, it proves, the family liveries of the East; I mean the colour of the sashes and turban ribbands; my colour is the Tyrian dye, which, I need not tell you, has a beautiful effect upon white.

I am sent for, and must for the present bid you adieu!

Three o'clock, morning.

You will, perhaps, Arabella, be so unbred as to conclude, some particular party or amusement has kept me up till this late hour; but know, two is absolutely a plebeian time of breaking up company at Calcutta.—Refreshed by your afternoon's sleep, and braced by the cool breezes of the evening, you consider time as made only for enjoyment, and repose as an outrage on conviviality.

My new friend, the country-born lady, met me the day after my arrival, and led the way

way to the tea-party; but instead of a parlour, &c. I found this party collected in the veranda, as on the preceding evening, and I drank my tea with a degree of satisfaction unknown in England in large companies; for, Arabella, instead of the exchanges (a most alarming and disgusting idea) to which you are there exposed, it is the delightful and sensible custom at Calcutta, for a bearer to convey your cup, when empty, to the consumer, without once letting it go out of his hands; and of course returns it you secure from every possibility of contamination.—I think I never was so pleased with any one article of polite etiquette in my whole life.

At dinner we were cooled by artificial means; but the heavenly breezes of evening reached us through the verandas—cheered, enlivened, and rendered us quite another order of beings.

Tea and coffee over, three card-tables (for, sorry I am to tell you, card-playing is here, in like manner as in Europe, the fashionable propensity) were brought forward, and I, as a visiter, and a stranger, was not permitted to decline.—I was on the point of seating myself, when the stake was mentioned; but what was my astonishment,

ment, when I heard five gold mohrs (ten pounds) spoke of as a very moderate sum a corner !

I drew back, Arabella, instinctively ; for the little treasure my father had so kindly made me mistress of, my heart told me, at this rate, would literally make itself wings, and flee away.

Mrs. Hartly, perceiving both my surprise and chagrin, asked me to honour her table with my company, where, she said, they were so humble as to stake only poor one gold mohr.—I gladly accepted her invitation ; and endeavoured to remember with fortitude, that forty good shillings sterling would be either won or lost by me in the course of a few deals ; whist being the polite game.

It is observed by some author, (but I do not immediately recollect who) that intoxication is the vice of a barbarous, gambling of a refined people ; this is verified to a fatal proverb on this spot ; for fortune, in the East (however refined the taste or manners of its possessor) appears alone to be acquired for the purpose of this wild dissipation of it ; insomuch, that the *ultimatum* of European desires, the return to their native country, is sacrificed to the gratification of this pernicious

icious propensity, as well as the peace and felicity of many most deserving families.—In a word, several hundred pounds were transferred from their possessors in the short period we were engaged.

At supper the saloon was superbly lighted, and the table sumptuously covered.—The same ceremony of parting the ladies was observed, as I have already described; so that the decanter and tumbler are evidently designed for her accommodation: and a band of music was introduced, which played all the evening.

I was requested to favour the company with a song, (vocal music being highly esteemed by the *Calcutonians*); and so anxious were the gentlemen to discover, whether I had a voice tuned to melody or not, that doubt and expectation sat on each countenance.

I dispelled their doubts, and, if the goddess of Flattery (who certainly touched the lips of her votaries with peculiar eloquence on the occasion) may be relied on, exceeded all they could have hoped for from the first daughter of Harmony.—It must, however, be seriously acknowledged, that, from indolence, relaxed fibres, or whatever

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ever other cause or impediment, my little powers equalled the best efforts of my fair friends; and I have bound myself by a solemn promise, to be an *angel* on each succeeding evening.

A jingling of unaccustomed sounds to my ears now interrupted my eulogiums, and immediately six or seven black girls were brought in, dressed in white muslin, loaded with ribbands of various colours, with two or three gold rings in their noses, by way of ornament, and silver casnets at their ancles and wrists, with which they beat time very agreeably to the tamborines that attended them. These are called *notch-girls*, (the word for dance) and their performance is called *notchee*.—They sang lively and tender compositions alternately, as was apparent by the movement of their eyes and hands, but to me otherwise unintelligible; danced with good effect; and, I could perceive, were well rewarded.—After which, the night being particularly fine, we were instantly conveyed in our palanquins to the Company's gardens; late in the evening, or absolutely midnight, being the only walking time in this climate. The moon was near the full, and her silver beams displayed unusual lustre.—Flowers of the most beautiful aspect and delightful scent, aromatic

aromatic trees and shrubs, perfumed the breeze ; and the viftos, or shady walks, had an air of enchantment ! Thus was the evening terminated, or, more properly, Arabella, the new-born day welcomed with luxurious glee ; the fenfes flattered ; the heart softened ; and love and friendship the prevailing fenfations of the foul !—For, where the mind is pure, under fuch aufpices as I have defcribed, love is friendship, and friendship affection.

You are now, my dear girl, thinking of your temperate and folitary fupper ; and may a repofe fucceed, tranquil as your nature.

Adieu!

S. G.

LETTER

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LETTER VII.

BEAR me, Pomona! to thy Citron-groves;
 To where the Lemon and the piercing Lime,
 With the deep Orange, glowing thro' the green,
 Their lighter glories blend: lay me reclin'd
 Beneath the spreading Tamarind, that shakes,
 Fann'd by the breeze, its fever-cooling fruit:
 Deep in the night the massy Locust sheds,
 Quench my hot limbs; or lead me thro' the maze,
 Embowering endless, of the Indian Fig:
 Or, thrown at gayer ease on some fair brow,
 Let me behold, by breezy murmurs cool'd,
 Broad o'er my head the verdant Cedar wave,
 And high Palmetos lift their graceful shade:
 Or, stretch'd amid these orchards of the sun,
 Give me to drain the Cocoa's milky Bowl;
 And from the Palm to draw its fresh'ning wine,
 More bounteous far than all the frantic juice
 Which Bacchus pours! Nor on its slender twigs,
 Low-bending, be the full Pomegranate scorn'd;
 Nor, creeping thro' the woods, the gelid race,
 Of Berries—oft in humble station dwells
 Unboastful worth, above fastidious pomp;
 Witness, thou best Anana, thou, the pride
 Of vegetable life, beyond whate'er
 The poets imag'd in the golden age:
 Quick let me strip thee of thy tufty coat,
 Spread thy ambrosial stores, and feast with Jove.

To taste the beauties of this poet's pencil, Arabella, you must visit Bengal, where I am more than ever convinced, he penned his glowing descriptions of a climate and its characteristics, Fancy, with all her fire, could not, unassisted by facts, have suggested.—The produce of this Eastern soil is the palm, the cocoa-nut, the tamarind, the guava, the orange, lemon, pomegranate, pine, &c. &c. in the highest perfection; nor can they be spoken of, by an animated beholder, in terms of common approbation. For my part, my mental exclamation is, "O for a muse, adequate to the sublimity of the subject! that the wonder-working hand of Nature might be fitly celebrated by me!"—for, as Thomson again expresses himself,

Great are the scenes——
 —— that see, each circling year,
 Returning suns and double seasons pass:

and poetry, Arabella, is the natural language, where all is loveliness, and magnificence, and power exhaustless as infinite.—But I am lost, you will perceive, in the immensity of my subject: "Come, then," as my favourite bard has it, of the Deity on a similar occasion——

Come then, expressive Silence! muse his praise.

On

On so vast a scale, indeed, are all things in this country, both human and divine, that if any earth-born creature could be pardoned the sin of ambition, it would be the Asiatics; nor can I doubt, from all I have already seen and heard, that numbers of them are proud enough to believe, and apply to themselves, the poet's language:

For me the mine a thousand treasures brings;
 For me health gushes from a thousand springs;
 Seas roll to waft me, suns to light me rise;
 My footstool earth, my canopy the skies.

At least, we may fairly conclude the Moguls, in their day of splendor, were of this haughty faith, if we read the following description of their encampments:

His residences (the Mogul emperor) during the temperate season, which lasts four or five months, are in the field; and few curiosities in the Eastern world were more striking than his camp; for, besides the military men, (which amounted to above 100,000, who carried their wives and families with them) he was attended by most of the great men in the empire, and followed by all kinds of merchants and tradesmen from the capital cities—in the whole, above a million of people;

and, with this retinue, he made a tour of a thousand miles every year, through some part of his dominions; and heard the complaints of his meanest subjects (an astonishing trait in so lofty a character!) if they happened to be oppressed by his nabobs or viceroys.

A caravan, of ten thousand camels and oxen, constantly attended the camp, and brought provisions from every part of the country; the commander of which was styled a prince, and vested with great power; his office being to furnish the camp with provisions.

The camp was at least twenty miles in circumference, and formed in a circular manner; the Mogul's tent and his women's being on an eminence in the centre, and separated from the rest by a high screen or enclosure; next to which were the nobility, generals, and people of distinction, in another circle; the rest succeeding in circles, according to their quality; the inferior people being nearest the outside of the camp: nor do I marvel, that such an emperor, at such a period, should be induced, in the vanity of his heart, to style himself the Governor of the Universe, the Ornament of the Earth, &c. &c. as is the custom, on the assumption of the imperial diadem; though,
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in the present circumscribed condition of the empire, those high-sounding titles are totally inapplicable.—But to descend to humbler subjects.

The East India Company, I find, pay the rent of such houses as the captains of their ships occupy during their residence at Calcutta; and it is well they do, or it would be a heavy tax upon their purse; for, could you suppose it possible such a sum as 500 sacre rupees (sixty pounds) per month, could be decently demanded, or cheerfully paid, by these birds of passage? it is, nevertheless, the fact: accordingly, those gentlemen, who have it in their power, build elegant dwelling-houses, at the expence of 30, 40, 50, and 60,000 rupees, for the purpose of letting them ready furnished; and, I am assured I shall see many, which bear the astonishing rent of 900 and 1000 pounds sterling per year, without a table, chair, or one necessary unhired at an equally extravagant rate.

The streets of Calcutta, at the part of the town inhabited by trades-people (who, by the way, are all Blacks, except what are called the Europe shops, of which I shall speak hereafter) are distinguished by the name of the *beisars*, or traders, by which they are occupied; as, the bada beisar, (fruit

(fruit and pastry); the muehee beifar, (the fish-market); the dewdwallar beifar, (milk-sellers); fuedwallar beifar, (hog-merchants); chine beifar, (sugar-venders); &c. &c. Moreover, cards form a separate article of merchandise, and the shops for selling them furnish one whole street—a proof of their great consumption and value in the East.

The Europe shops, as you will naturally conclude, are those ware-houses where all the British finery imported is displayed and purchased; and such is the spirit of many ladies on visiting them, that there have been instances of their spending 30 or 40,000 rupees in one morning, for the decoration of their persons; on which account many husbands are observed to turn pale as ashes, on the bare mention of their wives being seen to enter them: but controul is not an article of matrimonial rule at Calcutta; and the men are obliged to make the best of their conjugal mortifications.

Five streets, well built, and inhabited alone by persons of genteel rank, open on the Esplanade, which is ornamented to a great extent, in view of the first houses of each (one of which is the Governor's) with iron palisades, and makes a magnificent appearance. I shall enlarge upon this subject

ject as soon as I have made my intended tour through the town; the whole of which, however, is a flat situation, and the habitations are scattered over a great space of ground; for the gardens, particularly the Company's and Governor's, are extensive; nor are the private ones small; for, as it is one of the chief pleasures of the country, to admire the beauties of vegetation, enjoy the shade, and feed on the delicacies so bountifully bestowed by Nature, it is their pride to possess them all together in their prime excellence, to speak at once their fine taste, and abundant fortune to every beholder.

What a motley epistle is this! the great sublime, succeeded by the most inferior topics; but, Arabella, these transitions are not to be avoided, on a spot, where vivacity and dignity of mind is transient, and a low ebb of both the one and the other, the consequence of languor not to be resisted, and of gusts of heat not to be described.

I am,

Yours, as usual,

S. G.

LET.

LETTER VIII.

HOW prophetic were my words, Arabella, where I mention my apprehensions of the refusals I should be called upon to make!—A painful task to a feeling and not illiberal mind; but we must all submit to our destiny.

An *old* fellow, with an incredible fortune, ogles me, and professes his life depends on his obtaining the honour of my hand—my father smiles—and I, with an air of indolent complacence (the air of the country) receive his devoirs as the just tribute of my transcendent charms; which charms (it is already got into circulation) are held by me above all price (for the fetter of my vow has not yet transpired); which may possibly tend to a diminution in the train of my adorers, at least on the arrival of the next ships; for, as the life of a butterfly is but an hour, so the ladies, who wish to see themselves advantageously disposed of, must reprobate the antediluvian practice, and be careful

ful not to let the iron grow cold on the anvil; which, with few exceptions, is the universal conduct: so that, I doubt not, I shall soon behold this love-stricken greybeard at the feet of some more yielding damsel:—and may she make him as happy as she will flatter herself his wealth can render her; nor once experience the common fate of such expectations—finding she has been self-deceived.

Here is also a little dapper fellow, in a yellow silk coat, that buzzes soft things in my ear, and affects to keep all the rest of his sex at a distance: but I have given it in commission to Mrs. Hartly, to hint to him, that such behaviour is not lawful; the accepted lover alone being entitled to monopolize his fair one. I suppose we shall have him in the pouts on the occasion; this is, however, no formidable circumstance at Calcutta, where you may chuse and refuse at will.

What gives the men such constant access to the ladies their rank entitles them to visit, is, that on being once introduced, you make their abode an home—walk in and out at pleasure—have your chair and attendant ready for you, as a matter of course—and the only wonder is, what can have become of your new friends, if they happen to

absent themselves without a declared engagement. At breakfast, they tell me the news of the day; at dinner, solicit me to drink so many glasses of wine with them, that I ring unending changes on negative phrases (and those the best chosen) to prove my fund of polite language, and soften my cruel denials; at the card-table they lose their money with a good grace; and, at supper, are brilliant companions: nor be it unobserved by you (tho' your matrimonial chance is beyond measure critical) you do not forfeit your claims to homage or adoration, on becoming a wife; whence Slander is often busy. The opportunities are, indeed, inconceivable for amour, if the inclination be prompt; but I verily believe, that gallantry at Calcutta is, like gallantry in France, carried on by friendly compact amongst all parties; I trust you with my wife—you trust me with yours;—and that the abuse of such well-bred confidence is a rare instance of the ill effects thereof.

One or two offers, for their generosity and respectability, have been noticed by my father; and, with every profession of gratitude, declined by me. Mrs. Hartly remonstrates, from looking forward (she kindly says) to alarms such conduct gives rise to—from implying some European engagement, that must eventually deprive her of
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my company. I assure her, she is mistaken, I perceive, in vain; for it appears to her an absurdity, to believe, a heart, that possesses its freedom, should shut the door against unexceptionable overtures. I own, Arabella, I cannot account for it myself, unless it can be possible, that the multitude renders me indifferent to individuals; and, true it is, that you have not leisure for the observations, so necessary to be made previous to an union for life, in these crowded scenes; or (if you can pardon the seeming levity) sufficient time to know your own mind; one agreeable impression being immediately, if not chased away, blended with another: in short, my hour of attachment is not come; and I never will be prevailed upon to separate, or (what is the same thing) endanger the separation, of my hand and heart.

Was there any prospect of your coming to Bengal, I might, perhaps, think otherwise than, I am convinced, I ever shall do, with the reflection on events that would prevent our ever meeting more.

I am, &c.

S. G.

LET-

LETTER IX.

I ADORE the customs of the East.—Instead of having their servants, or biefars (trades-people) speaking in broken words, and mistaking, consequently misrepresenting, what their superiors say, the dresses and accommodations of the Europeans do not more perfectly discriminate them than their language; every person taking the trouble, or rather considering it their amusement, to learn to ask for what they want in Gentoo phrases; and making English the vehicle only of polite conversation.

Early this morning, the weather beginning to be settled, I took advantage of a cool breeze, and was conveyed in a phaeton through the town and its environs.

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The WRITERS BUILDINGS,

Arabella, in like manner with our inns of court, are divided into chambers, more or less elegant, according to the rank and consequence of their owners. This, I need not tell you, is the nursery of all the great men; for, from being writers, they are advanced, as their abilities enable them, to the highest civil offices, or even military, if their genius inclines them that way. I was struck by them altogether, as the monument of commercial prosperity; and made some comments on the subject, that did credit, I was told, to my sensibility and understanding;—but I seek not to shine in your sight Arabella; you know the height and depth of my intellectual endowments, and honour me accordingly. A little ostentation is necessary in the East; but English estimates run upon the softer merits; for we are there taught to believe, that a woman's noblest station is retreat:—for that, as the poet says,

Her fairest virtues fly from public sight,
Domestic worth, that shuns too strong a light.

But,

But, be it always remembered by you, that Indostan is the land of vivacity, rather than that of sentiment.

At the back of the Writers Buildings is the

CALCUTTA THEATRE;

the inside of which I have not yet seen; but am informed, from good authority, that it equals the most splendid European exhibition.

The performers, Arabella, are all gentlemen, who receive no kind of compensation, but form a fund of the admission-money, to defray the expences of the house. It consists only of pit and boxes: to be admitted to the first of which, you pay eight rupees (twenty shillings); to the last, a gold mohr (forty shillings); it is not, therefore, wonderful it should be rendered a brilliant spectacle.

I was also shewn, *en passant*, a tavern, called the London Hotel; where entertainments are furnished at the moderate price of a gold mohr a head exclusive of the dessert and wines—two very expensive articles indeed! for claret, notwithstanding

standing its free consumption, is in private families five rupees (twelve and sixpence) a bottle.—Of their desserts I shall speak hereafter.

At the coffee-houses your single dish of coffee costs you a rupee (half-a-crown); which half crown, however, franks you to the perusal of the English news-papers, which are regularly arranged on a file, as in London; together with the Calcutta Advertiser, the Calcutta Chronicle, &c. &c.—and, for the honour of Calcutta, be it recorded, that the two last-named publications *are*, what the English prints formerly *were*, moral, amusing, and intelligent. I wish, Arabella, you could turn this hint to profit; but much fear, the frenzy of politics, and the fever of scandal, are confirmed diseases, and, as such, incurable.

Nor is Calcutta unfurnished with Livery Stables, riding being much the fashion at certain seasons of the year. And I had a distant view of the Hospital, a building that deviates from the general plan of architecture, being three stories high; and I am told, it deserves my particular notice and inspection.

At the Old Fort, which is situated at the extremity of those streets terminated by the Esplanade (I shudder to name it) are the ruins of the
Black

Black Hole, where the no less memorable than tragical event took place in 1756; for, out of one hundred and forty-five British subjects, only twenty-three survived the horrors of one night's imprisonment: amongst those saved, was Mr. Holwell, the Governor's chief servant, who has written a most affecting account thereof. The cause of this melancholy catastrophe was a quarrel of the Nabob, or Mogul viceroy, Surajah Dowla, with the Company—who suddenly invested Calcutta with a large body of black troops; the then Governor, and some of the other principal persons, threw themselves and their chief effects on board the ships in the river; whilst they who remained, for some hours bravely defended the place; but, their ammunition being expended, were compelled to surrender on tolerably flattering terms.

The Soubah, a capricious and unfeeling tyrant, instead, however, of observing the capitulation, forced his prisoners into a secure hold, only about eighteen feet square, and shut them in from almost all communication of free air.—But, I draw a shade over miseries I am unequal to paint; and will only add, that the seasonable arrival of our countrymen, Lord Clive and Admiral Watson, put the English once more (with some difficulty) in

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in possession of Calcutta; the insensible Nabob, after plundering the place, having returned to his capital, under the persuasion that he had totally routed and subdued them; and the war was concluded by the battle of Plassey, as you may read in the British annals, won by Colonel Clive, and the death of Surajah Dowla; in whose stead Mhir Jaffier, one of his Generals, a friend to the English, was advanced to the Nabobship; and Calcutta flourished more than ever, and became what we find it at this day.

The Old Fort is now totally deserted, and, except the church, has few buildings to boast; nor is its custom otherwise occupied than by the landing of copper, &c. &c. for the Company's service.

The recollection of what I have related, so affected my spirits, that I begged to return home; and, having committed my morning's excursion to paper, shall endeavour to remember the concluding part of it no more.

One very singular circumstance at Calcutta is, Arabella, that there are no nurseries in any of the

the houses; nor does a child (with few exceptions) make its appearance.

Having made the observation upon repeated occasions (for you know I delight much in the company of children) I could not forbear asking Mrs. Hartly, how it came to pass that no little folks had met my eyes?—she, smiling, replied (for she is a sweet, amiable woman) “Suspend your curiosity until to-morrow, and this mystery shall be unravelled.” Accordingly, at the usual early time the ensuing morn, we set off in our palanquins on a journey, the motive of which I was not aware of; and soon arrived at a most romantic and beautiful spot, at about five miles distance from our place of residence; where, it was revealed to me, the infant part of the family (as is the custom of the country) was situated; and I had the pleasure of making an instantaneous acquaintance with a boy and girl lovely as cherubs, and innocent as lovely.

These retreats (which in England we should know by the name of villas) are at Calcutta called *Bungilos*, and possess all the charms and beauties of rural existence. The description of one of them, however, will serve for all, with only the
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necessary and natural abatements, fortune, taste, and liberality, produce in every instance.

Hartly Bungilo consists of a suite of apartments on a ground floor, with a thatched roof and verandas, and stands in the centre of a garden, I am wholly at a loss to describe to you. Imagine, therefore, to yourself a spot, adorned with all the choicest flowers with which you are acquainted, formed into espaliers, and encircling the fairest parterre your eyes ever beheld; with recesses, such as queen Dido would have admired, and temples the Graces might not disdain to visit; with, moreover, a spacious tank or fish-pond at certain distances—every footstep appearing fairy ground, and every breeze perfume.

My surprize and pleasure diverted Mrs. Hartly exceedingly.—“Take my advice another time,” said she; “and, instead of enquiring into things you are unacquainted with, endeavour to behold them, and judge for yourself.” Had I told you, in so many words, that my little boy and girl were, with whatever suitable attendance, living in a thatched house, whilst I occupied what you call a palace—would you not have shook your head, and changed your opinion of a woman you now profess to esteem?—whereas, beholding them lodged

lodged in the bosom of free air and tranquillity, jessamine and roses forming their bed, and peace and joy their pillow—will you not own, that mothers at Calcutta have their children's happy condition as much at heart, as in a country, where, at the top of the house, they are trusted to the care of mere hirelings, and much farther removed from the maternal superintendence than in our bungilos; though those bungilos are under the regulation of well-educated and well-principled gentlewomen, whose time and talents are devoted, in return for a handsome stipend, to their service and benefit.

I had no reply ready; therefore only pressed her hand, in silent approbation: but she is discernment at all points, and every movement is to her intelligence.

Tell me, my dear girl, if you can, why the genuine delight of conversing with children is so seldom sought for?—To me, next to angels, I love and revere them. The dawnings of their reason are considered by me as so many emanations of the Divinity, and their artless turns of fancy the most rational of human entertainments.

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My little new friends had not been five minutes presented to me before they found out the weak side of my character; and, having won me, to all intents and purposes, to their wishes, engaged me by a solemn promise (which I will actually perform) to visit them every morning I can contrive to steal from the company at Hartly-House.—But most transient are our pleasurable moments in this world: I was summoned to re-ascend my palanquin, at the end of two hours, (the fleetest of all the hours I had spent at Calcutta) and was brought home with the actual loss of my heart—an acknowledgment that gave rise to innumerable effusions of Eastern gallantry, wholly unacceptable to me, and, as such, wholly disregarded.

It is usual, it seems, at a certain age, to send the sons and daughters of this golden world to England for education; but great improvements having been made, during this last quarter of a century, in every branch of polite and valuable knowledge, among the Calcuttonians, this, together with the terrors of the ocean, which await such infant fugitives, has induced many fond fathers and mothers, as well as Mr. and Mrs. Hartly, to make it worth an accomplished Englishwoman's while to form their manners, &c. &c. under the parental auspices. The *gouvernante* at Hartly Bungilo,

Bungilo, who comes precisely under this description, is the widow of a clergyman—has a pleasing person, and a well-stored mind—and was prevailed upon to make the voyage on the consideration of 250 gold mohrs (500 pounds) to be paid to her on her arrival; where she lives with as much discretion as elegance, and is esteemed and honoured by all who know her.

A large *bouquet* (every flower of which, by appearing more beautiful than the last noticed, I had selected from the multitude) was ordered to be carried for me to Calcutta. Nature is here lavish of her most beautiful productions; and so peculiarly attentive to gratify the eye and the scent, that it is impossible to bring the island of your existence into the smallest competition with the air I now breathe, or the objects I behold—a great denial, you will perceive, to the unceasing remembrance of you, I have so repeatedly assured you of; as a healer for which breach of faith and truth, I have hit upon a proposal, that, if you are human, must have attraction for you.—The Nabob, Arabella, a young smart fellow, lives but at the distance of four miles from Hartly House. He has, it is true, several wives already; but you shall be his wife of wives; and as for his copper complexion, you are too wise to make that

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an objection.—Come then, and dwell only a short time with us—let him behold your face, and have a few opportunities of discovering the perfections of your temper, and he will think no price too high to purchase your friendship and affection. I should rejoice to see you a Nabobess, that you may surpass me as much in rank, as you surpass me in every personal and mental accomplishment. But you are so sentimental, there is no dealing with you; and I expect, in the lines of your beloved Young, I shall be asked, by way of answer to my wild question,

Can wealth give happiness?—look round and see
What gay distress, what splendid misery!

which is so truly English, there is no standing:
I therefore hasten to conclude myself,

Yours, &c. &c.

S. G.

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LETTER X.

THE manners of the ladies at Calcutta are somewhat contradictory—now all softness and femininity, and now all courage and resolution; as you shall hear :

They take a particular pleasure, on the one hand, in obliging and informing strangers—melt into tears at every tale of sorrow—and sweetly sympathize with those whose spirits are depressed; on the other hand, you behold them so little attentive to female decorum, and so fearless of danger, that a scarlet riding dress, which gives them most the appearance of the other sex, enraptures them—and, to drive a phaeton and pair with a vivacity, a *dégagement*, or whatever may be the proper epithet, to mark their skill and unconcern, in the midst of numberless spectators, is their delight; whilst I, on beholding every such exhibition, say, with Dr. Young,

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— Such charioteers as these
May drive six harness'd monarchs, if they please.

for, to characterize them completely in your sight, I must add, that the ladies of gaiety and *ton* always make a point, on these occasions, of having a gentleman companion, who lolls at his ease; the office of managing the reins, &c. &c. being wholly assumed by the lady. I wish, nevertheless, you could see these phaeton enterprisers; for their attendance and accompaniments are in the high style of Eastern etiquette. A servant, in the dress I have heretofore repeatedly described, runs on each side the horses, with long-handled flappers in their hands, sometimes holding by their manes, and sometimes at a little distance; and the effect is both striking and pleasing. The phaetons are English built, and ornamented with all the taste that country can boast, and all the expence the Asiatics are forward to incur, for their exterior importance;—the horses finely and splendidly set out, with silver nets to guard their necks from insects, and reins elegantly decorated;—and, to finish the whole, a kittesaw is suspended, not unfrequently, over the lady's head—which gives her the true Eastern grandeur of appearance.

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Lady C——m——rs, who, by the way, is one of the examples of the unions which here take place (I mean as to the disparity of age) is one of the most celebrated on this fashionable list; and, for attendant beaux, both as to smartness and variety, yields to no one.

Mrs. Hartly is, however, quite another order of beings, and, like myself, is the daughter of an East India captain, but conveyed by her father to Calcutta much earlier in life;—she has, therefore, or at least I imagine so, imbibed all their amiable prejudices, and thinks matrimony the duty of every young woman, who meets with an offer she cannot disapprove;—for she persuades herself, and, perhaps, on experience, that esteem is the best basis of affection, and best security for our rejoicing in the choice we make; for what is called love (a propensity to approve, without the sanction of reason or the pause of sentiment) she affirms, blinds the understanding, and causes us to rest satisfied with pleasing manners, with too little attention to moral rectitude; an error, in judgment, and a self-desertion, she asserts, we smart under to the latest moment of our existence.—I am, nevertheless, unconvinced, and unconverted.

She

She is, however, perfectly free from those traits of affectation which are so generally conspicuous in a flattered woman, (and flattery at Calcutta is, literally speaking, our daily bread) has a cultivated understanding, and a feeling heart, and is at once the honour and happiness of her husband; my beloved mother, moreover, expired in her friendly arms: judge, then, if she is not dear to me!—But these are the very things that constitute my danger; for I know, though she knows it not, that without a congeniality of taste, of sentiment, of vivacity, and of seriousness, there is no chance of felicity for me as a wife.—In a word, Arabella, my father is the model of him I can ever love, or ever wish to unite my destiny with; and, until I meet with this *rara avis* (for well you know the treasures of his head, the treasures of his heart, and most agreeable person) I am determined to remain,

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S. G.

LETTER

LETTER XL

I AM half frantic with delight!—A review, Arabella!—What English *female* heart vibrates not at the bare mention of a review?—We are to dine in the New Fort, at the commanding officer's, (the Fort Major) whose house is situated within its circumference; and it is deemed one of the finest forts in the world, has a chain across the river, to secure the harbour from invasion, covers near five miles of ground, and has the bustling charms of a garrison.

This fort, which was erected by the East India Company, at an immense expence, is, I find, the nursery for forming and disciplining the troops from England; and it is with pleasure I am enabled to assure you, that they are provided for in an ample manner, when in garrison, and kindly treated; which, in fact, is very different to the notions entertained, and the opinions circulated, in England.—It is true, that, when
called

called forth into the field, their duty is not easily performed, the intense heat of the climate being hard to support; but, in order to throw in every possible softening, their pay is augmented to twelve rupees (forty shillings) a month, which augmentation is called *Batta-money*.—And as a proof of the advantages held out to them, one of these common soldiers, who was shewn to me a few days before he embarked, left India with seven hundred pounds of his own acquiring, for England!—Yet it is doubtful whether he will remain there or not; for few re-visit their native country, who do not, after a short period, re-enter the East India service.

The barracks, I am informed, are very fine, of course the men are comfortably lodged; and, as it is the interest, so it is obviously the desire of the Company, to keep them neat in their lodging, their persons, and their feeding, (death and dirt being synonymous in this climate) the last is therefore diligently guarded against, to prevent the dire ravages of the first.

The garrison consists, you must understand, almost solely of the Company's troops, the Government forces being seldom quartered there.—These soldiery are, however, held in high respect,

pest, and form a regular guard of centinels at the Governor's and the other great officers houses, and also patrol the streets, as members of the police, to clear them of such nuisances as they would otherwise be liable to, and particularly from sailors, when in a state of inebriety; and over this part of the military a Town Major presides, who belongs to the Company, and is the regulating officer, or general intendant, on all occasions.

Near the fort is the hospital I have already mentioned, erected for the reception of *all* indisposed persons, from whatever cause; throughout which, the wards or chambers are so neat and accommodating, that wretchedness reposes, and malady is put to flight.—It is lighted and cooled by verandas, and every possible means are adopted to procure the free circulation of air, &c. &c. and it is allowed, by all who have seen it, to be superior to every thing under that appellation in the universe: nor could I forbear on viewing it, exclaiming,

These are imperial works, and worthy kings.

I was, however, informed immediately, by one present, of the source and nature of its establishment; and find it was built by the united contributions of the Europeans of Calcutta, and the Com-

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Company.—Yes, Arabella, this blessed asylum originates from commerce, and owes its support solely to commerce;—and observe, so charmed am I with the benevolence and the liberality of its institution, that, should I ever have an unwieldy fortune to leave behind me, the only hospital I will endow with it, shall be the Hospital of Calcutta.—But I am unable to impress you with the pleasurable sensations I enjoyed, on being an eye-witness of this invaluable place of refuge and accommodation for my diseased fellow creatures and fellow-countrymen.

To gain admission into the hospital of Calcutta, there is no other interest or recommendation necessary, than being an European, and deprived of health. Moreover, men of honour and humanity, tender of the lives of those received under their care, and tenacious of the just application of their subscription-money, are its visitants and superintendants; no experiments can therefore be tried, at the hazard of a worthy, though humble individual's safety; no harpy keepers can grind the face of the patients, or riot in plenty, whilst they are expiring from wretchedness and neglect; nor is a single nurse continued, that fails to perform the duties of her engagement: and the manifold restored patients prove
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the utility and the benevolence of the institution.

I blush, Arabella, to feel, that all I have written, as I have it from my father's assertion, is an impeachment of the customs (in this instance) in my native country; and it would be god-like in you to promote new and salutary regulations, by publishing so noble an example as I have thus set before you.

I am so struck with these matters, that I cannot forbear making them the frequent subjects of my conversation; extolling the country I now reside in, and sighing for the disgraces of the country I have quitted; and, could you but behold the fixed attention of my auditors, you would smile:—but, in the pastoral language of Shenstone,

They love me the more when they hear
Such tenderness fall from my tongue,

I was prevailed upon to be mistress of a phaeton in this excursion; but so *outré* should I have exhibited myself, that I intreated my father would let me drive him. This was not granted. An exchange was, however, settled, that was equally to my satisfaction; for Mrs. Hartly took my father

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ther with her, and I had her husband for my cicisbeo.—O Arabella! if you knew half Mr. Hartly's virtues—filial, conjugal, paternal, universal—you would rise up and say, this is a man worthy—worthy female respect, worthy masculine celebrity; yet does he appear perfectly unconscious of his own merit, and is the first to praise, and the last to condemn, every person living that is mentioned before him. I think I must devote one entire letter to his history, notwithstanding subject-matter flows in upon me so rapidly, that I am at a loss what to give the preference to. I am, indeed, aware, that the colour of my own mind is apt to bias my choice; and that I rather entertain you with what interests my feelings, or flatters my fancy, than such particulars as may be best entitled to your perusal;—it is an error I will endeavour to correct, when I next give myself an opportunity of assuring you, that I am,

Your's, &c.

S. G.

LETTER XII.

THE party to-day was brilliant—all that pomp and splendor could do, was done, to conceal the ravages of burning suns; and never were military gentlemen more animated, more obsequious, or camp more delightful; but Mars in the East, like Hercules at the court of Omphale, has more gallantry than hostility about him.

Between Chitpore, the Nabob's house, and the Fort, at a place called Bugee Bugee, a perpetual encampment, *in terrorem*, I imagine, is kept up, to prevent any fatal surprize for the future; and a very pretty appearance it makes; but you will, no doubt, as it is situated in the very neighbourhood, hear more of it in future; for the review, of which I have been so happy a spectator, is quite a distinct and separate entertainment.

The troops performed all their evolutions with equal credit to themselves and their commanders: nevertheless, from my acquaintance with the gentlemen,

lemen, &c. &c. the whole display had, to me, more of a public shew, calculated to please the ladies, than to alarm the enemies of the Company by their skilful manœuvrings; for which gay and giddy idea I beg the gentlemen's pardon—and very candidly acknowledge, that though their great complaisance has removed every idea of terror from my mind, yet the utility of these reviews may be very great; for (besides keeping the foldiers in practice) the minds they are intended to influence behold them in a quite different light, and tremble at the idea of their prowess.

We had a superb gala at the Fort Major's; who is so agreeable a man, Arabella, that I detected myself in the act of enquiring, whether he was married or single. His lady, however, very opportunely appeared, to save my credit, and reconcile me to myself; for she evidently merited and engaged my entire approbation, without any alloy.

She made me many pretty compliments; and, whilst I beheld her, and listened to her, I became impatient to know whether she had a little family or not (for it is my wish to be acquainted with all the children at Calcutta), and I have obtained her promise to introduce me at her Bungilo in a short time.

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I am told, this passion for the society of children is the characteristic of an unvitiated taste : it may be so ; but of this I am certain, that the politeness of the people of Calcutta is such, that what is not vice, they will exalt into virtue ; and what is, they will melt down, by their charitable report, into error and misfortune.

You can have no notion of the *nonchalance* and *dégagement* with which I conducted myself through the day ; but you will recollect, that women, who are accustomed to live with a multitude of men, acquire a *modest* assurance (let me call it) private education cannot bestow.—Friendship and respect are the sentiments reciprocally professed, and cheerfulness and joy the universal objects : therefore, those who can do the kindest, or say the pleasantest things, are unquestionably the most esteemed companions ; for Othello's liberal-mindedness seems to prevail throughout (at least) all my agreeable connections.

“ 'Tis not to make me jealous, to say my wife is fair, loves
“ company, sings, dances well, &c. &c. ; for, where virtue is, these are most virtuous.”

I am sensible I am not correct in my quotation ; but a visit to your library will enable you to read it at large, for both your instruction and amusement.

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But, instead of ending this letter *en militaire*, as was my intention, I must touch upon a circumstance that I advert to with a sigh.—In my (*dear*, I had almost called it) native country, existence is pleasing far beyond the period at which it becomes painful here; the early maturity of the natives leading down to early decay; insomuch, that you would be shocked to behold a woman of thirty; for her appearance, Arabella, is equal, in infirmity and wrinkles, at least, to the oldest-looking woman in England at three-score. Both sexes marry young, have families, decline, depart, and are remembered only in their off-spring—Not so the Europeans, even at Calcutta—having received their birth in the happy zone of your residence, Arabella, their nerves are much stronger strung; their youth, moreover, is passed under the same healthful meridian, which enables them to endure the Eastern sun, for ten or twelve years of their mid-life, with tolerable satisfaction; and their days are lengthened into old-age by their return to Britain.—But we will quit this melancholy side of the prospect, if possible, for ever.

The Nabob, I need not tell you, is merely a viceroy to the Mogul, in like manner with your Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, and the representative of his most sublime master. Formerly his residence

dence was at a distance from Calcutta, and his intercourse with the Europeans restricted to embassies; but now his palace of Chitpore (for well does it deserve the name of a palace) is only four miles, as I have already told you, from Hartly House; and on such friendly terms does he live with the military gentlemen, that he gives them entertainments of dinners, fire-works, &c. &c. at an immense expence; but always eats alone, according to the customs of the Asiatic Mahometans, seated on the ground, which is overspread by superb carpets (by the way, the only carpets I have heard of in India—the fine matting being, for coolness, substituted in their place); and, what will surprise you, is, that the captain or commanding officer of the Nabob's guards, which consist of a whole battalion of black troops, is an Englishman, a younger brother of an ennobled family, and who paid 80,000*l.* (acquired in this world of wealth) for the appointment.

The uniform of this battalion is the same worn by the Company's troops—red turned up with white,—with turbans to distinguish the divisions thereof.

The exterior of Chitpore in some degree bespeaks the grandeur of its owner; but I am informed

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formed few things exceed the magnificence of its interior architecture and ornaments. The apartments are immense—the baths elegant—and the seraglio, though a private one, suitable, in every particular, to the rest of the building: nor must the gardens be unmentioned; for they not only cover a wide extent of ground, but are furnished with all the beauties and perfumes of the vegetable kingdom. When he rides out, a detachment of his black troops attend him;—and observe, Arabella, the Nabob *Salam* (the word for compliment from his soldiers) is a most graceful application of the back part of the hand to the front of the turban, with a slight bend of the head.

But I should tell you, all persons of any rank have, in addition to the servants I have described, a *Salam-bearer*; and the note or card, containing compliments of whatever kind, is called a *Chit*:—nor is there a morning that my toilet is not covered with *Salams* and *Chits*, to the no small gratification of my pride, and support of my consequence.

Billiards are much played at Calcutta—a game well adapted, in my opinion, to the convenience of the country—it requiring no great exertions of either body or mind: but I re-
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tract that opinion on the instant; for the sums won and lost must keep the blood in a perpetual fever, even to endangering the life of the parties.—In private families, the billiard is a kind of state-room.—At the coffee-houses, you are accommodated with tables and attendants for eight *anas*, or half rupees, by candle-light, or six by day-light, a certain number of hours—every coffee-house having at least two tables: so that men of spirit have as many fashionable opportunities of ruining themselves here, as you Europeans can boast. I lament this abuse of understanding; but fashionable vices are the hardest of all others to eradicate; and, that it will ever become fashionable to be moral or well-judging, I have my doubts and apprehensions. You, my dear girl, are a blessed exception. I have friends around me, at this moment, that are your counterpart, and models of all that is good or great in the human character.—I have written myself into the spleen, and will therefore bid you good night.

I HAVE told you, here are livery-stables. I now add, that horses are cheap at Calcutta; and, what you would little expect to hear of, racers are bred for the turf.

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The race-ground is a distinct part of the Esplanade; and the horses that run for a subscription-plate, as in England, are fed, they inform me, with meal, as you English feed pigeons; and I shall soon have it in my power to give you a complete description of this amusement in the East, as the annual period is now not far distant.

I have resumed my pen; for Mr. Hartly and my father are not, I find, yet returned from spending the evening at the governor's;—and though palanquins are safe conveyances, and their company numerous, I must hear they are come home before I attempt to repose for the night, or, more properly, morning; for it is now more than half after three.

Palanquins are, indeed, such state appendages, that, if a gentleman at Calcutta (which is frequently the case) chuses to walk when on a visiting party, his palanquin must follow him in the same form, in every particular, as if he himself was within; a departure therefrom being deemed a solecism in polite etiquette.

Bless me! what do I hear?—Drums and musical instruments—and the streets are suddenly illuminated. What can it mean?—Mrs. Hartly is, however,

however, at my door; and I may, perhaps, have it in my power, before I conclude, to make amends for this very dull epistle.

A Gentoo marriage procession, Arabella, and an extreme pretty one too, was the novelty my ever-attentive friend to my amusement, Mrs. Hartly, called upon me to be a spectator of.

The bride was carried in an elegant palanquin (Did I ever tell you the difference between a lady's and a gentleman's palanquin? I believe not) with tassels of immense finery (the distinguishing decoration for ladies) and near forty couple of men preceding, and an equal number following it; with wreaths of flowers beautifully fancied, and lights without number. After which came the bridegroom in his palanquin also, with great ceremony, and as many attendants as his bride; but not one woman, except herself, in the whole procession.

The musicians played the most lively tunes imaginable, and the company danced in pairs as they passed along, making use of the wreaths with nearly as much taste and good effect as the figure-dancers in your London theatres; and in this manner

manner they proceed, it seems, through the whole town—the Gentoos, and their Padras (the Bramins) living all around it.

They live, Arabella, (except from the austerities, in some instances, in their religion) the most inoffensively and happily of all created beings—their Pythagorean tenets teaching them, from their earliest infancy, the lesson of kindness and benevolence; nor do they intentionally hurt any living thing:—from their temperance they derive health, and from the regulation of their passions, contentment; and come immediately under that description of Pope.

They ask no angel's wings, no seraph's fire;
But think, admitted to their native sky,
Their faithful dog shall bear them company.

I shall, however, make it my business, now my curiosity is awakened and interested, to learn all possible intelligence of a people so peculiar, and so distinct from the rest of the world—and one door of knowledge can be easily opened upon me; for the Sekars are all Gentoos (kind of brokers) under whose care the East India captains put their merchandize, and who fix the rates of purchase according to the ebbs and flows of the supplies intrusted to their superintendence; and many of them amass large fortunes. Their profits are established,

blished, and their faith unimpeached; and they are found so necessary, that it is impossible to dispose of European goods without their assistance or notice: moreover, any of the Company's servants who arrive in the India ships, and bring property with them, on application to a Sekar, are furnished with whatever money they stand in need of, without bond or other legal security; for a breach of moral rectitude on the part of the borrower would be productive of indelible disgrace and personal danger—the Company protecting these Gentoo brokers, notaries, or factors, in all their lawful rights.

My father, you know, is that sort of man, who steals the love of all who know him; accordingly, his Sekar, though a Gentoo, and though such intercourse is unusual, has attached himself to his employer by the heart-felt ties of friendship and affection—walks in and out of Hartly House at pleasure—and converses by signs with me, with many marks of high approbation. He has moreover, I find, a relation that is a young Bramin; and (shall I own to you a most extravagant piece of vanity, which has recently sprung up in my mind?) an admirer, Arabella, of his character' would be to me a proof of my attractions I should be proud of.

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I will tell Mrs. Hartly my whim, and engage his relation to introduce him. The compliments I at present receive, are all of the common-place kind, and may with equal propriety be addressed to any sister female ; but to please a Bramin I must have perfections of the mental sort, little inferior to the purity and the benignity of angels :—in a word, my good dispositions would be cultivated and brought forward by such an acquaintance, and my bad ones corrected ; and, as celibacy is their engagement, the soul would be the only object of attachment and admiration.

You will, I suppose, conclude, flattery has turned my head ; but, to be serious, it would delight my peculiar taste to converse with beings of so superior an order, and to become an humble copy of their exemplary and beautiful simplicity.

What a transition !—but it is not my fault ; for my father, on coming home, told me, as an agreeable piece of news, that the theatre will open next week—and I rejoiced beyond measure to hear it.

Though, you must understand, the stage at Calcutta is under regulations which Britain has renounced ; for there are no female performers ;
—and

—and I could most heartily wish that this reproach of morality could be done away in England. The custom, you know, is foreign, and alone imported by the polished Charles, on his return from exile in foreign lands; and you will not attempt, I am persuaded, to deny that this fatal change in theatrical politics has rendered the playhouses so many nurseries of vice, or public seraglios far more censurable and licentious than any the Eastern world contains;—for the difficulty here is for any male individual (except their owner) to get into them; whereas, in your metropolis, every nocturnal exhibition, of even the most sentimental drama, is an advertisement where gentlemen, on certain conditions, may be accommodated with a temporary companion—and I blush to recollect the incompatibility thereof with delicacy and propriety.—But I will tell you more of my mind on this subject, when I have seen with what effect dress can bring forth (as ladies) the smart young fellows of Calcutta, on theatrical ground.

What a mistake did I fall into, when I imagined, that one day spent in domestic luxury would be a picture of all the succeeding ones I should pass!

Amusement is varied with every varying season of the year, except the months when the *hot winds* (what

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(what a paradox! yet is it a reality) annoy this coast, and the rude hand of sickness interrupts every scheme of pleasure; insomuch that, to guard your own life at every avenue, and fortify your mind against the wounds it must sustain in the persons of your dying friends, is the whole employment.

Heaven! how equal is thy bounty, and thy goodness to the children of men!—The scenes I now participate would be too highly fraught with felicity, untempered by the ravages of disease, and the distresses of heat; for, at the seasons I have mentioned,

—— in blazing height of noon,
 The sun, oppress'd, is plung'd in thickest gloom:
 Still horror reigns, a dreary twilight round
 Of struggling night and day, malignant mix'd;
 For, to the hot equator crowding fast,
 Where, highly rarefied, the yielding air
 Admits their steam, incessant vapours roll.

Whereas, in your soft climate, Arabella, such are your humble tables and humble pleasures, that all the transports of animation and of magnificence are unknown to you, and you creep through one dull track from infancy to age.

Adieu! adieu!—There is an oriental effusion for you! begun, I perceive, with too much

amity

penalty for the turn I have given it;—but I must either be painfully serious, or idly gay, when I remember the days that are gone—days spent in the most rational delights—and in company with my (to me) lost Arabella.

Your's, &c.

S. G.

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LETTER XIII.

ON the race-ground, Arabella, (at a distance from the immediate track of the courses, you will conceive) are two trees situated, whose spreading branches afford the most delightful shade, and under which I had it in contemplation to have voted for the erection of a temple.

But, behold ! on mentioning them in terms of admiration, I was, to my surprize, told, they were called the Trees of Destruction—and with great propriety, you will allow, when I add, that all the duels (which are not few in this country) are fought under them.

Duels at Calcutta !—my nature revolts at the idea !—Is not the angel of Death, then, sufficiently industrious in reducing the human race, that the arm of friend should be uplifted against friend (which I understand is the case) on as trivial provocation as in England, where the bills of mortality are so thinly filled ?

But, Arabella, (for I will be gay, in my own defence, on even the gravest subjects) is it not a

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most mortifying abatement of my consequence, that these charms of mine have not yet sent two despairing, two passionate, or two any species of contending lovers and rivals, to die by the hands of each other, under these same trees, in my name?

Nay, so far am I from having occasioned a single duel, that I never suspected this convivial people of the bare idea of such a thing.—I must set to work, and, if possible, get at the knowledge of so extraordinary a circumstance; for I should suppose with Addison, (from all I have seen of their gallantry and their admiration) that, if they must quarrel, they would think nothing worth quarrelling about, except a fine woman;—and should it prove, (as that nevertheless favourite writer of mine affirms) “that there is no quarrel without a woman in it,” I shall be ashamed of my own insignificance, and break with all my male acquaintance for their light estimation of me.

If duelling is, as I am assured, the fashionable propensity, I shudder to think what dire ills a young and beautiful coquet might cause in this land!—But, for the peace of society, coquetry is practised at Calcutta in a new style; for the handsome young women (except myself, Arabella) are all

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all wives ; and their adorers, you will perceive, could not, with any decent pretext, cut each other's throats ; and few husbands are disturbed at the innocent freedoms of either manner or conversation in their *cara sposas*.

You shall not, however, with that face of your's, come among us, until I am disposed of ; for, though I am harmless where I have no competitor, having cast the eye of desire upon Chitpore, you would find me a formidable rival ;—nor do I doubt (though tilting with the Nabob would be out of the question) but I could raise a little army to oppose and combat such Europeans, at all points, as were capable of advancing your honour and glory at my expence.—And thus have I outlived the liberality of which my former letters brought you so striking a proof : but Chitpore was then unknown to me, and the Nabob, in appearance, out of my reach ; whereas now I can throw out a lure whenever I please—and who can tell what dignities are destined for.

Your's &c.

S. G.

LETTER XIV.

I AM this evening, Arabella, invited to a concert at the Governor's, of gentlemen performers, who, I am told, are masters of the several instruments they undertake to exercise; for it is the common received opinion at Calcutta, in direct opposition to the Chesterfield tenet, that Nero himself, if he had not sunk the emperor in the fidler, would have done honour to the imperial diadem by his musical taste and skill. But it was the pride of his nature alone that was gratified by his performances—his senses were untouched—his soul unharmonized—and enmity and death occupied his thoughts, even in the moment his fingers called forth sounds of delight: whereas, on the contrary, King David, who, as we have it on sacred record, not only played upon, but tuned his voice to his harp, was as great a king, and, with one only exception, as good a king, as any succeeding period can boast; neither his personal dignity, or his regal reputation, being lessened thereby.

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I am going to make a distinction, which I expect you to subscribe to; and that is, the distinction between dressing to the best advantage, in order to do credit to our friends, and doing so for the purpose of gratifying our own vanity. Mrs. Hartly is so proud of her guests, that she proclaims their imaginary, as well as real merits, far and wide: and I am sensible, in consequence of such partial reports, I am expected to be found the standard of fashion and good taste in the article of appearance.

Would it not therefore be to mortify her, and disgrace my father, if I was to fail in all possible and proper attention to my toilet?

I have not this day failed, I assure you; nor is the occasion a common one. The Governor is entitled to our respect, in honour of the British sovereign, in like manner as (on a court day) the British sovereign and his amiable consort are entitled to the *salams* and superb decorations of those who present themselves at St. James's.—And so much by way of apology for my splendid trappings; for, my dear girl, I have it yet to tell you, that a set of diamond pins from the very mines of Golconda have been given me by my father, and a pair of bracelets of pearl, with gold clasps,

clasps, studded with small brilliants, by Mrs. Hartly, who declares to me, that whatever I behold of her prosperity originates from the friendly support of my father. I have also a necklace of pearl, of more value than I chuse to mention; and my hair will be decorated, my arms, and every part of my visible person, beyond all I can give you an idea of.

But, surprising to relate, Arabella—such are the corrected and confirmed principles of the Gentoo, that, though the diamond merchants travel with all their tempting treasures under their sole convoy, without fire-arms, &c. &c. not one of them has ever been deprived of an atom of his property by this whole people.—What then are we Europeans made of? or how must we appear in their gentle and upright eyes, who have waded through the blood of millions, to bring home gems of inconsiderable value, in comparison to what these travelling merchants are possessed of?—On such recollection, I am ashamed to know myself a European: nor can it be doubted.

If there are, as some tenets imply, a distinction of heavenly situations, will not this good-minded people occupy the first in rank; for nearest to the divine attributes of any thing you can have a conception

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ception of, is their kind-heartedness and probity.

I have had a harp presented to me, and am already complimented upon the delicacy of my finger. It is, you know, an instrument well adapted to this Arcadian climate; and I have played upon it at Hartly Bungilo by moon-light.—Can I go higher in my description thereof?

The ambition, Arabella, is, who shall have the honour of adorning the top with a wreath, the daily offering of my host of adorers;—and I wish you could behold the well-dissembled dejection, and the well-dissembled delight, which mark the features of the rejected and approved votary: in a word, it requires very peculiar gifts to believe one's self a mortal.

Apropos of mortality—I have visited the burying-grounds, which are to me scenes of melancholy entertainment, from the affectionate fancy displayed in commemorating a departed friend;

For many a holy text around is strewed;

and the air of neatness, that proof of unabating attention, which every where meets the eye, so
unlike

unlike the crusts of dust which disgrace the labours of the sculptor in that first of royal sepulchres, Westminster abbey, and the astonishing insensibility of the French in this article (for in France, if we except the monuments of their kings, not a stone tells where they lie)—the fairest, the bravest, and the best, are alike unnoticed and unremembered.—Strange and unaccountable circumstance !

You have visited St. Pancras, in the neighbourhood of London ; nay, I recollect we have visited it together, and together interchanged our sensations on the occasion ; for there, as we read it from the hand of the graver, are deposited the sacred and beloved remains of infancy, of youth, of maturity, and of age. Alas ! Arabella, the Bengal burying grounds (for there are two of them) though they greatly resemble that churchyard in monumental erections, bear a melancholy testimony to the truth of my observations on the short date of existence in this climate.

Born just to bloom and fade,

is the chief intelligence you receive from the abundant memorials of dissolved attachments and lamented relatives.

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Obelisks, pagodas, &c. are erected at great expence; and the whole spot is surrounded by as well-turned a walk as those you traverse in Kensington Gardens, ornamented with a double row of aromatic trees, which afford a solemn and beautiful shade: in a word, not old Windsor church-yard, with all its cypresses and yews, is in the smallest degree comparable to them: and I quitted them with unspeakable reluctance.

There is no difference between these two grounds, but in the expence of the monuments, which denote that persons of large fortune are there interred, and *vice versa*; whence, in order to preserve this difference in the appearance, the first ranks pay five hundred rupees, the second three hundred, for opening the ground; and they are disjoined merely by a broad road.

I intreated Mrs. Hartly would lead me to my dear mother's last mansion—she started, and accused herself of the highest indiscretion, in consenting to my viewing a spot that could suggest such an idea to my mind; and so earnestly besought me, as a proof of my affection for her, to return home, and never again attempt to investigate a circumstance, so evidently desired by my father to be kept from my knowledge, that

friendship and filial reverence prevailed over every other impulse, and I suffered her to put me into my palanquin without reply.

But palanquins are conveyances ill calculated to remove distressing thoughts; and, during my state of miserable sequestration from all social connection, I would gladly have exchanged places with any friend of yours, that enjoyed only a corner of a hackney-coach and your company. Nor shall I, from what I have this day experienced, ever be reconciled to this *sola* condition, however conformable to the fashion of the country. This letter, my dear girl, will waft a sigh from your

SOPHIA GOLDBORN.

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LETTER XV.

HAVE I interested your curiosity by my mention of a concert? I can assure you, it well merits your notice and information.

It was performed in a grand hall or saloon, lofty and spacious beyond all I could have conceived. Dryden's *Timotheus* was one, of the pieces with which we were presented; the Coronation Anthem a second; the overture to Artaxerxes, that *chef d'œuvre* of Arne, a third—of all which I was an enchanted auditor: yet were there moments, Arabella, when a painful pleasure, from the article of your absence, stole upon my heart, and traced out such correspondent lines in my countenance, that Mrs. Hartly (whom nothing escapes) charged me with some soft recollections of England.—“Why will you not be sincere,” said she, “with a woman whose heart is in your hand; and

and confess, what is so apparent, that your affections are not your own? Think you, I am not sufficiently liberal-minded to love those you love, and resign you, though one of the first pleasures of my existence, to the man of your choice?—O wherefore is he an inhabitant of a world I must never hope to behold again?”

Now, who shall say, that love and friendship are not the same?—for similar are the sensations of the tender regret separation excites, and similar the animated delight of a re-union: and we shall meet, my Arabella, we shall re-enjoy the satisfactions distance deprives us of; we shall—but all this plaintive language is very unoriental, and shall be renounced; and more especially, as there is no due proportion between the strength of your attachment and mine—for I follow the fortunes of my father—the hand of destiny has torn me from you: whereas you are now, on the death of your aunt, perfectly mistress of yourself, and can, if your inclination prompts you, come to me with propriety; whereas I could not come to you, unaccompanied by my only parent, without dishonour—the dishonour of violating my filial duty. Let me hear from you on this point; and take care you well acquit yourself, or, on being weighed in the usual
balance

balance of even my warmest partiality, you will be found wanting.

The Governor's dress gives you his character at once—unostentatious and sensible. His lady, however, is the great ornament of places of polite resort; for her figure is elegant—her manners lively and engaging—and her whole appearance a model of taste and magnificence.

Envy, malice, and uncharitableness—how do those malign vices, blemish and deform that last best work of Heaven, the human mind!—Perfection itself is not secure from their baneful breath. But I forget, upon this occasion, that there is a spur to their intent at Calcutta, beyond what they can generally plead. A change of Governor would introduce a change in Eastern politics; and numbers blaze forth, that are now unremembered. But, as I have told you before, I am no judge of these matters; and will not, therefore, trust myself on a subject that might mislead me. The heart will, I grant you, have its private decision, and its private election; and what power or fiat, less than divine, shall deprive it of its natural rights?

I foresaw

I foresaw that this concert would produce some great event. My father looked almost as young as his daughter;—a circumstance I premise as an apology for what is to follow. A widow lady with thousands at her feet—a superior offer to every thing my youth and person has procured me—has insinuated, in so many very explicit terms, to Mrs. Hartly, that she is ambitious to make him master of them.

Mrs. Hartly executed her commission with a very grave face, and I laughed; but, I believe, looked chagrined, on my father professing himself much honoured, and that he would wait upon the lady.—Arabella, what do those words imply? that I have lost my father?—Was he not wedded to my mother's memory when in England, when whole oceans rolled between him and her hallowed remains? and can he, will he insult—But I have done: we are none of us angels, my dear girl—we are frail, frail mortality.

But should it be possible for so astonishing an event to take place, farewell India, farewell for ever! My father's blessing, his permission to end my days
with

with you, and once, but once, to behold my mother's tomb, is all I will ask: for my grandfather, you know, has left me a sufficient provision; and I will constitute it my sole support. My mind, so little power have I over it, although I write so calmly, is all a chaos.—My father calls for me: I will instantly attend him—receive his commands with firmness, with resignation; nor dare so far to invert the order of things, as to hope or wish he should regulate his conduct by my will and pleasure. He is my father, Arabella; and I have only to forget he was the husband of my mother, to approve all his conduct.

THE trial is over, and you shall judge how I supported it, without one anticipating reflection escaping me.—I found him alone in the garden Veranda, and unusually serious. He rose when I entered—smiled—and looked my father.

“My dear Sophy,” said he, seating both me and himself—“I am this instant returned from a very affecting scene.” I sighed, and was silent.

“You heard what Mrs. Hartly said last night, and must recollect my reply.”—It was the nearest
of

of all remembrances to my heart; but I only bowed in answer.—“The lady,” continued he, “has a noble mind”—(I trembled as he spoke, but he was too much taken up with his subject to notice it)—“she deserved every polite attention in return for the high compliment she made me—and all things are settled between us.”—“My mother!” exclaimed I, in a scarce articulate voice, and fainted in his arms—A fine piece of heroism, after all my preparation and resolves!—I instantly revived, complained of heat, and begged he would proceed.

“You are sensible, my beloved girl,” said he, “how awkward the situation of a young unmarried woman is at Calcutta;—you have declined every overture made you, though some of them deserved a better fate: but your inclinations are your own—I am the friend, not the tyrant of your heart, Sophia; and such I will prove myself.”

Ah! sighed that rebellious heart—am I to be the saving consideration for your conduct?

“A woman of honour, fortune, and merit,” continued he, “is not an offer a man of my time of life could have thought of; and the opportunity

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portunity of giving my child a protector of her own sex, is an opportunity not to be left unimproved. She will not return to England without you; and, with a greatness of soul you will respect, has transferred her affections from the father to the child.—Yes, my Sophia, she reveres my sorrows—acknowledges my heart cannot be recalled from the mansions of the dead—asks only my friendship, your friendship, and will prove herself an ornament to her sex.—Our inclinations, I repeat it, will not always obey our voice; whence I shall ever leave my child's unfettered:—but, though we cannot bestow them, we can regulate them at will, and make an act of stern necessity an act of choice, in every thing but delivering up our persons to an unbeloved object."

I wept aloud, Arabella—embraced my father—besought his pity and his pardon; and all this without his discovering my motive—for, unconscious of deviating in a single thought from what was excellent and amiable in his own character, it never once occurred to him, that little mean suspicions occupied my breast.

We are to dine with her to-morrow; and next to Mrs. Hartly, I have assured my father I will
love

love and revere her: but, from knowing Mrs. Hartly first, she has got possession, said I, of the very next place to my Arabella in my affections, and I do think can never be superseded. My father smiled at my mental etiquette, and left me with a full purse to collect myself at leisure.

Well do I now know my father is incapable of changing:—but beware, Mrs. D——, how you flatter, lest you should deceive yourself; for such a friend, Arabella, as my father, must be dangerous to such a heart as Mrs. D——'s; which, having once loved to the height of revealing its sentiments—of rising superior to the bars of decorum, and the chains of custom—cannot answer for its feelings, or in future hope to restrain them by any human fiat. Yet hopeless love, my father says, where the principles are pure and upright, always subsides into friendship: it may be so; but I would not chuse to adopt Mrs. D——'s example in this instance, however unexceptionable I may find her in every other. Is this a mark of a narrow or a liberal way of thinking? I will take your word for it, though I cannot my father's: he is no judge in his own cause, and entertains too great an opinion of the force of just sentiments and the authority of reason.

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This is an eastern adventure we had not taken into our account ;—but all females do not come under our British bard's description,

————— She never told her love,
But let concealment, &c. &c.

for who does not know the lines as well as I, the writer of this epistle? and it is impertinent to assume the credit of information we cannot give.

I shall to-morrow morning exchange the soft passion for the subjects I have till now uninterruptedly pursued—my accounts of Calcutta, &c. &c.

Your own

S. G.

LETTER

LETTER XVI.

WEDDINGS here, Arabella, are very joyous things to all parties; especially, I should suppose, to the padre or clergyman, who frequently receives twenty gold mohrs for his trouble of performing the ceremony. The bride and bridegroom's friends assemble, all elegantly dressed, at one or other of the young couple's nearest relatives, and are most sumptuously entertained; and the congratulatory visits on the occasion put the whole town in motion. It is a festival I have not, however, the smallest desire to treat my friends with; for, even was my choice fixed, and every obstacle obviated, I should have unconquerable objections to making so public an exhibition of myself on so solemn a change of condition—an idea I cannot say I have in common with my acquaintance; for I have reason to believe, I am the only person in Calcutta, not even my well-beloved Mrs. Hartly excepted, that

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that has the same idea in this instance—which is entirely the effect of custom.

A very pleasing, because a very singular circumstance, is, that in this country the head gardener is a professed botanist, and of course conversible on every part of creation around him: hence the classes and characters, as well as the beauties, of those shrubs and flowers that attract my notice most, are my frequent topics of observation and enquiry. And besides the entertainment, the benefit is abundant of having a well-educated person in this capacity; for his judgment is the household land, where the garden is concerned; and you are sure to have your table supplied, and your flower vases furnished with good sense and propriety. Moreover, I can mention ladies, (and myself, Arabella, for one) who, when at a loss for a subject, are enabled, by this gentleman's assistance, to read a lecture on the several articles of which their bouquet is composed. But to be serious, to me it is highly agreeable, let the art or science be what it may, to meet with people of information and good address: it is giving you a companion wherever you go, and promoting that disposition for local enjoyment so much recommended by moral writers, and which undeniably forms a large portion of our happiness.

Accord-

Accordingly, I have already learned to distinguish the native and exotic beauties of the parterre, and with no small pleasure (I might say pride, for I certainly have much nationality about me) discover that many English plants and trees, particularly apple-trees, which are hard to rear, and consequently their fruit of great value, are treated with all the attention and tenderness foreign products are honoured with in England.

Besides, do but conceive the advantage to a man or woman of fashion, who has taste without leisure, and a desire of knowledge without the smallest inclination for study, to have a liberal-bred officer (I may properly call it) of their household, capable of qualifying them to figure away upon subjects that are an honour to human nature, with whom they can converse at will on the most rational and delightful topics. If you love me, fail not to enforce these considerations on your wealthy and right honourable friends, and at least put them in possession of one means of shining. Nevertheless, my sweet friend, amidst all the joys our double seasons yield, the following lines frequently occur to me; and, if you can feel their truth in Britain, conceive how strongly they must affect my mind in this all-subduing climate—

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Who can un pitying see the flow'ry race,
 Shed by the morn, their new-flush'd bloom resign
 Before the parching beam?

Three of the gentlemen, who so largely contributed to our entertainment at the concert, are, I find, theatrical performers; the Patty and Miss Sycamore of the Maid of the Mill, the Rosetta and Lucinda of Love in a Village; and such are their agreeable persons, that I doubt not but, by the aids of the toilet, they fill up those several parts without dissatisfaction to either the ear or eye.

I have not yet described to you the wonders of a desert. Ices, Arabella, (could you have supposed such a thing?) ices, in the highest perfection, are, in the months of November and December, presented you at Calcutta.—This circumstance of the ice was to me so wonderful, that I was earnest to have it accounted for; and I find, that this temporary luxury is procured from some of the slender inland (if I may so express myself) branches of the Ganges, which are cut out into canals, or flow in rivulets, under various names. A thin plate of ice forming itself thereon, in some of the coldest nights the coldest season affords, is taken from thence with great care, and manufactured
 for

for the first tables: nor do some of the tanks or fish-ponds less advance the purposes of elegant accommodation in this respect, when the evenings are such as you have in April, or the mornings somewhat like your month of October.

At supper last night I drank a glass of excellent London porter, with sensations of recognition you may much better imagine than I can describe. Mrs. Hartly tells me, it is always on the sideboard, for those who like it; but I never before heard it mentioned. We have also small-beer, perry, and cyder, from my native country, and fine spruce-beer, the produce of Bengal; and, having more company than usual, we did not retire until after four o'clock: and I begin almost to think it just, that those who thus continue to have two days in one, should live but half as long as those people who divide their existence, upon even a fashionable average, between sleep and amusement.

Had Thompson never been in India, how, let me ask you, could he have so admirably described an animal, that, to be known in all its terrors, must be seen?

Lo! the green serpent, from its dark abode,
Which e'en Imagination fears to tread,
At noon forth issuing, gathers up its train

In orbs immense, then, darting out anew,
 Seeks the refreshing fount ; by which diffus'd,
 He throws his folds : and, while with threat'ning tongue,
 And deathful jaws erect, the monster curls
 His flaming crest, all other thirst, appall'd,
 Or shiv'ring flies, or check'd at distance stands,
 Nor dares approach.

To-morrow I am to be presented to Mrs.
 D——. I feel an awkwardness, I know not why ;
 for, from the accounts I have received of her, any
 other worthy man but my own dear father should
 have my warmest vote to obtain her. Her fortune,
 Arabella, is her smallest merit ; for she possesses,
 it seems, much intellectual cultivation, and has an
 excellent heart ;—a *soft* one she has proved it to be.
 Good night : read not the last two or three lines
 with attention, that you may not condemn

Your most affectionate,

S. G.

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LETTER XVII.

THE visit is over—and, if my father can resist the merits and winning graces of this woman, I will only say, he is more than human.

Ah! Arabella, with what nice attention had she prepared for our reception!—her house is a palace in miniature, and her servants the best-formed and disciplined, if I may so express myself, I have ever yet seen.

I approached her with a somewhat of awe and reserve I could not get the better of; but her countenance is open as day, and her smile engaging.—“By permission, Madam,” said my father, with an air of humility I am confident touched her to the soul, “by your permission I bring my daughter to solicit your friendship; she is prepared to honour you, and your indulgence will soon teach her to love you; and may this first interview be ever remembered by you both with the pleasure it gives to me.”

“You

"You have deceived me, Sir," said she.—"Is this your child, that stands in need of countenance and support?—What may she not command at Calcutta!—She exceeds my utmost expectation."

"Sophia," replied he, "is a good girl, Madam, and has continued to lay her father under the greatest obligations; her voyage to India was solely for my sake; she has left friendships behind her that are not easily supplied: it is incumbent upon me, therefore, to procure her every possible compensation."

A polite and animated return was made by the lady to this speech, and perfectly became her; for, as she does not call herself young, she has a licence to speak in terms that would be too assuming for you or me. But I have a discovery to communicate, that alarms me, perhaps, without a cause;—she has a son, Arabella; and, as their heads at Calcutta are full of lovers and husbands, I am more than half afraid there is some plot in this sudden acquaintance and friendship.

I watched her eyes with diligence; but her whole demeanor was unexceptionable, and the character of the fair friend finely preserved; but she seems to understand the method of attaching such

a man as my father, and, I fear, will reserve the fable of the Turtle and Ring Dove, having got the clue from him to his heart, by making herself as necessary to his peace, as she must be pleasing to his sensibility.

Now, Arabella, am I about to play the woman in a most unworthy degree. I have never beheld Mrs. ———'s son, or even heard of him until this visit; yet am I armed, at all points, to refuse an offer I may never receive.—What unpardonable prejudgment! May he not have his mother's graces, his mother's understanding, which is much celebrated?—He may; but take my word for it, he is not the man I shall ever unite myself to; for your made-up matches are, of all things, the most odious to me. Let the man have eyes to chuse me, on whom I am ever prevailed upon to bestow my hand, that I may not suppose the question is coolly canvassed whether I shall be accepted by him, aye or no. I am neither a vain nor an ambitious woman; but I own I am not able to stand the idea of being pointed out by the maternal finger to a booby heir, that would never otherwise have thought of me. I would not thus be disposed of, even to the Nabob himself. Jerry Blackacre (for so my mind would perversely call this unknown young man) never once, however

ever, made his appearance; nor did Mamma glance the way I apprehended.—May I find myself alarmed without a cause!

Mrs. D—— is a woman of taste and good education, and has a menagery, as you call it in England, of the feathered tribes peculiar to this country; beautiful cockatoos, and minhos without number; lories—but she gave five-and-twenty gold mohrs for three of them; they are natives of Batavia, and in high esteem here for their articulation: she has also a bird with buff-coloured wings and a white breast, of the Bilo species, that has a million of worshippers among the Gentoos, and named by them the Bramine kite.

She has presented me with one of each, if Mrs. Hartly can forgive my introduction of them into her family; but I am certain, if they prove inconvenient inmates at Calcutta, she will have them accommodated at Hartly bungilo, and my little friends will be kind to them for my sake.

There are, besides the Bramine kite, very many birds that enjoy high privileges; the Indian raven, for example, (a bird known in Europe by the name of the Rhinoceros bird) which draw themselves up in curious ranks in the most populous streets of this town

town without interruption, and are called by the sailors Jerry Daw's soldiers.

Mrs. D—— is to return our visit in a few days. I am but a novice in these matters; but it appears very extraordinary to me, that, after what has passed between her and Mrs. Hartly, (and that she cannot flatter herself my father's refusal of her can be a secret, as it speaks herself) she should chuse to mix with such heterogeneous parties: but she carries off the affair with an admirable grace, in which my father assists her in a manner peculiar to himself, and, I believe, without her perception of it. It is well for the world at large, and happy for me, that all his arts are honest ones, and all his frauds pious; for, had a bad man his endowments, his collected mind, his command of face, who would be able to stand against him?—I will teach myself to be a more dutiful daughter, and less capricious member of the community, that I may merit the partiality I know you feel for

Your's, &c.

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LETTER XVIII.

NO wonder lawyers return from this country rolling in wealth; their fees are enormous; if you ask a single question on any affair, you pay down your gold mohr, Arabella, (two pounds)! and if he writes a letter of only three lines, twenty-eight rupees (four-pounds)! I tremble at the idea of coming into their hands; for what must be the recoveries, to answer such immense charges!—You must, however, be informed, that the number of acting attornies on the court roll is restricted to twelve; who serve an articulated clerkship of three years only, instead of five, as in England. These twelve regular bred gentlemen, nevertheless, from motives of friendship, or for certain *douceurs* best known to themselves, lend their names, on manifold occasions, to the great extension of practice.

The style of living, if you wish to be deemed genteel, is indeed such as demands an ample revenue; but the custom of the country is so much in favour of improving your fortune at all points, that it is not considered in the smallest degree derogatory for gentlemen of whatever denomination to merchandise,

dise, or, as I have already mentioned, to provide lodgings or lodging-houses for the East India Company's servants, who are only temporary residents.

The fee for making a will is in proportion to its length, from five gold mohrs upwards; and as to marriage articles, I should imagine they would half ruin a man, and a process at law be the destruction of both parties. A man of abilities and good address in this line, if he has the firmness to resist the fashionable contagion, gambling, need only pass one seven years of his life at Calcutta, to return home in affluent circumstances; but the very nature of their profession leads them into gay connections, and, having for a time complied with the humour of their company from prudential motives, they become tainted, and prosecute their bane from the impulses of inclination.

My father's Schar has obliged me with the introduction of his relation, the young Bramin, at Hartly House. He has not left the Gentoo university at Benares, which is remarkable for its sanctity, above three years. He made us, however, but a very short visit; as it was near our tea-hour, and he could not, by the laws of his religion, partake of any refreshment; but promised by
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his interpreter to see us again soon. My vanity will not let me suppress one compliment that was paid me by a Moor of great dignity: "Such," said he, "are the daughters of Paradise."—I would have given more than I shall mention to have known my Bramin had distinguished me from the rest of the company; but was not so happy. We will, nevertheless, if you please, talk of him in his absence, or at least of the people to which he belongs.

The Gentoos, Arabella, are divided into five tribes; the first of which is the most highly esteemed, and the only one (like the tribe of Levi among the Jews) from whence the priests are taken: I need not therefore add, it is called Bramins.

The second is the Sittris, whose profession ought to be the military alone; but they are not so strict as the preceding, and frequently engage in other employments.

The Third are called the Beisa tribe, which consists chiefly of merchants, bankers, and banias or shop-keepers; the schars are, I believe, of this tribe.

The fourth are called the Sudder tribe, who, by their original institution, are the meanest servants; nor can they ever rise higher.

And the fifth are called Atarris, which is a tribe deserted by and formed of the refuse of, all the others; the travelling palanquin-bearers, the most inferior and laborious of all offices, are taken from thence. And I will in this place inform you, that the travelling palanquins are so constructed, that you repose, as in Revel's machine, on a couch—are served with your loll shrub, or other favourite refreshments—and thus, with incredible expedition, are conveyed to the distance of five hundred, or any other number of miles, up the country; and there is no other mode of travelling by land whatever.

By water, you have bugeros of so large a size as to accommodate whole families; and, being provided with live and other suitable stock to your fortune, &c. you shorten or lengthen your voyage at pleasure, and have your state-room cooled by verandas, as in your own houses. You will therefore perceive, that our pleasures are not so local as might be imagined; and, in these nautical excursions, it is common for several bugeros to set out in company, interchange their visits, and

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have their little concerts, as agreeably as may be. A party of this sort is planned for my participation, and I suppose Mrs. D—— will be added to the list; be it so; but, if she would give me a favourable impression of her prudence, she will decline being in the same bugero with my father.

She has, however, told me some interesting things; and I begin to have confidence in her friendship.

Her father and mother were both English, but she was born at Calcutta; they conspired, Arabella, at a tender age, to sacrifice their child for wealth. A marriage (if it could be so called, that was a violence on the heart) was agreed to by them, when Mrs. D—— was only twelve years old, with a great military character, whose manners were ferocious, and his person deformed. Nine years did he live, the tyrant and the oppressor of all who knew him. A library was the sole support of her spirits, and the sole relaxation she was permitted to enjoy. She bore all without complaint; for she was sensible complaint would be unavailing. Her father and mother were little benefited by their conduct; the man of war forbade them all intercourse with his wife—he would not have her taught the sin of opposition to his will; she

she was his property, and as such he would guard her from the approach of persons who had, to his knowledge, private views to gratify : and at length, in order to deliver himself from their reproaches, he offered them an annuity for life, on condition they resided in England ; for England they embarked, without being allowed a parting interview with their child, but were lost in their passage, on the Malabar coast ; which piece of news her husband abruptly communicated to her, and laughed at the tears it occasioned her.—“ You could not love them,” said he, “ it is impossible ; the matrimonial sale they made of you renders it impossible ;—to enrich themselves, they were wholly regardless of your fate ; and, had you not married a man of honour, you must have been miserable.” He died, however, at the end of nine years, and she has remained nine years a widow.

Her fortune, it seems, has only a short time been clear of litigation ; and her health, during that whole period, was in a very indifferent state. The first is now ascertained to her utmost satisfaction, and the second happily re-established ; when, unluckily, Arabella, she has created a new grievance for herself, that nothing but her own death, in all probability, can deliver her mind from
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The Bramins pretend, that Brumma, who was their legislator both in politics and religion, was inferior only to God. He was, possibly, some great and good genius, that, in like manner with Confucius of the Chinese, regulated their manners, and promoted their happiness; and is therefore rendered, by gratitude and superstition, the object of their adoration.

The Bramins, however, affirm, that he bequeathed them a book called the Vidam, containing all his doctrines and institutions; and that, though the original is lost, they are still possessed of a commentary upon it, which they name the Shahstah, written in the Shanscrita language; a dead language at this time, and known only to the priests who study it. The foundation of Brumma's doctrine consisted, it is said, in the belief of a Supreme Being, who created a regular gradation of beings, some superior, and some inferior to man;—in the immortality of the soul; and a future state of rewards and punishments, to be bestowed and received in a transmigration into different bodies, according to the lives they had led in their pre-existent state. From which it appears
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most likely, that the Pythagorean metempsychosis took its rise in India;—but that the necessity of inculcating this sublime, but otherwise complicated doctrine, into the lower ranks, induced the priests, who are by no means (the case in most religions under the sun) unanimous in their doctrines, to have recourse to sensible representations of the Deity and his attributes: so that the original doctrines of Brumma have degenerated into downright and ridiculous idolatry, in the worship of divers animals, of a variety of images, and some of the most hideous figures, either delineated or carved; and they have holidays to the number of twenty annually, in honour of each;—a kind of religious jubilee, during which public processions and festivals take place; which I shall not fail to describe to you on becoming a spectator of them.

All their other pleasures are confined to visiting their pagodas, or temples, which are stupendous but disgusting buildings, and to the satisfactions of domestic life; and they assuredly are, as I have already observed to you, the most tranquil and temperate people on earth.—But, besides the tribes I have set before you—their ancient mode of arranging their precedence, and their numbers of casts or classes, divisions of those tribes, I shall have occasion to observe to you hereafter.—Water,

ter is their drink; but such, Arabella, is their strict adherence to what they deem their religious duties, that though expiring with thirst, they would not taste the water of their sacred rivers, the Indus, called by them *Sindoh*, the Kishna, and the Ganges; the tanks or fish-ponds, fed by the heavens, or by natural springs, being alone their liquor on all occasions. But they never fail to wash themselves in the Ganges, or to oil their bodies, before they break their fast. In a word, their manners are highly interesting, from their simplicity and liberal-mindedness; and I blush to feel how superior to all that Christianity can boast, of peace and good-will towards men.—But, my dear Arabella, I have one caution to give you, which is, not to set me down for a plagiarist, though you should even stumble upon the likeness, verbatim, of my descriptions of the Eastern world in print; or once presume to consider such printed accounts as other than honourable testimonies of my faithful relations: and certain it is, that true and genuine relations of objects and events admit of very little variation of language. This premised, I shall not doubt of informing or entertaining you (and perhaps both the one and the other) in repeated instances; and ill requited be the busy individual that attempts to lessen the consequence,

sequence, or impeach the originality of my reports.

'This doctrine of the metempsychosis is to me the religion of humanity; for it is apparent, that no other tenet, temporal or divine, could have so effectually restrained the sons and daughters of this Eastern world from committing the wantonest acts of cruelty towards the brute creation, as the apprehension of being exposed, by the chances of transmigration, to similar evils;—apparent from the marking effect it has on the conduct of the Gentoos, in contradistinction to all other species of natives; for, instead of the arrogance and ferocity daily manifested by the several nations around them, their hearts are softened into a tender concern for the kind treatment of every creature living—a concern which so powerfully regulates their feeling, that, in the very bosom of voluptuousness, they will feed on no delicacies but such as the vegetable kingdom present them with, except the nectareous juices obtainable from animals with relief to themselves, and salubrity to their owners—a very elegant manner, I expect you to allow, of telling you that milk is a favourite article of the Gentoo diet. How unlike the degenerate posterity of Adam

(Of half that live, the butcher and the tomb)

is

is this order of beings ! and how easy the transition
into angelic natures !

But enough of the Gentoos for the present, and
of every other subject, except the last and first
that occupies my thoughts, namely, with what
affection I am

Your unalterable friend, &c. &c.

S. G.

LET.

LETTER XIX.

PHYSIC, as well as law, is a gold mine to its professors, to work it at will. The medical gentlemen at Calcutta, Arabella, make their visits in palanquins, and receive a gold mohr each patient, for every common attendance—extras are enormous.

Medicines are also rated so high, that it is shocking to think of: in order to soften which public evil as much as possible, an apothecary's shop is opened at the Old Fort, by the Company, in the nature of your London Dispensaries, where drugs are vended upon reasonable terms. The following charges are a specimen of the expences those Europeans incur, who sacrifice to appearances.

An ounce of bark, three rupees, seven and sixpence—an ounce of salts, one rupee, half a crown—a bolus, one rupee—a blister, two rupees,
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five shillings—and so on in proportion; so that, literally speaking, you may ruin your fortune to preserve your life.

But then, to balance this formidable account, every profession has its amazing advantages: accordingly, as I am told, it is no uncommon thing to clear 140 per cent. by merchandize, on many European articles, and particularly the ornamental for ladies, and on men's hats.

Moreover, from the high demands at taverns and coffee-houses, you may conclude provisions are brought to market at a high price: on the contrary, even during the time the East-India Company's ships are lying off Calcutta, and so abundantly increase the consumption, six fine ducks are sold for a rupee, two and sixpence. Bread is also good and cheap; fish both excellent and cheap. Likewise, fowls, eggs, and milk, very cheap; butter dear—geese cheap—turkies dear; and Arabella, half a sheep is often bought for one rupee. Vegetables are plentiful and very fine—the potatoes are better tasted, in my opinion, though much smaller, than in their native soil—we have salads in great quantities, and with in every one's purchase—and French beans and green pease, are, I am told, in as high perfection at

at Christmas, as in the meridian of your summer season, and with this advantage, that they have them in your summer also. Fruit of every kind is delightful—oranges, lemons, limes, pomegranates, ananas, pommelos (which are brought to table stript of their outside coat), plantains, &c. &c. the product of their own soil; with apples, as a rarity, currants, raspberries, &c. &c. from my native country, and raised here with much care and attention. Thus you will perceive wine is the heaviest family article; for, whether it is taken fashionably or medicinally, every lady, even to your humble-servant, drinks at least a bottle *per diem*, and the gentlemen four times that quantity—a fine number of twelve and sixpences in the course of the year! Their domestic animals are the same as in England—and, in like manner with England, dogs of various kinds, and cats, are great favourites—the ladies have also parrots, squirrels, minchos, lories; &c. &c. as pets.

They have elephants, camels, horses (Arabian and Armenian), oxen, buffaloes, sheep, deer, lions, and

Tigers darting fierce

Impetuous on the prey their glance has doom'd,

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as Thomson tells you; with many I have not enabled myself to mention.—Nor must you be uninformed, that to hunt this terrific creature, is one of the polite amusements of the East; on which occasion the gentlemen set forth with all imaginable magnificence, with bands of music, and dogs, and spears, and sometimes give fatal displays of their courage. I am happy to know my father will never make one in such wild parties; for surely there is much more of madness than folly, in thus sporting with their personal safety, and braving the author of their existence. I know very well, Arabella, that hunting these rapacious and powerful animals, can boast both ancient and regal origin; but what is wrong in itself, can never be rendered right, because some illustrious brute or blockhead has made it his practice.

The farmers, who supply the Calcutta markets, reside chiefly about creeks and little bays formed by the artificial meanders of the Ganges—and have a Beisar day once a week, for the sale of their commodities—especially up Tomluek river, as high as eight miles, which, though shallow, is navigable for all Bugaros; and it is fashionable to visit the dairies, &c. &c. in its neighbourhood.

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Confectionary shops are kept both by French and English men; but the latter are most approved, and their profits are far from inconsiderable—nor is it unreasonable it should be so, when it is remembered they have their wishes to revisit the country of their birth, in common with their superiors; and are willing to purchase that felicity by dint of toil, in the service of those who choose to employ them: they have large imports in this way, as, I believe, I have already mentioned, from England. You will perceive I am not unobserving or unenquiring.—But to proceed to other matters.

His Majesty's Coronation would have been ushered in with ringing of bells (the constant herald of joy in England) but for one little impediment, viz. Arabella, there is but one church bell at present in Calcutta, and a deep melancholy-toned one, for the sole purpose of telling the public some one of their fellow individuals is no more. All funeral processions are however concealed as much as possible from the sight of the ladies, that the vivacity of their tempers may not be wounded.

Funerals are indeed solemn and affecting things at Calcutta, no hearses being here introduced, or
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hired mourners employed: for, as it often happens in the gay circles, that a friend is dined with one day, and the next in eternity—the feelings are interested, the sensations awful, and the mental question, for the period of interment at least, Which will be to-morrow's victim?—The departed one, of whatever rank, is carried on men's shoulders (like your walking funerals in England) and a procession of gentlemen equally numerous, and respectable from the extent of genteel connexions, following—the well-situated and the worthy being universally esteemed and caressed whilst living, and lamented when dead. The Padra, however, has his ample profits; who performs this last pious act with the greatest propriety: but, such is the elasticity of European minds, that, the ensuing day, the tavern is again visited by those very gentlemen, who know, and acknowledge it to have been the bane of their lost friend—excesses of this kind being only suicide in a different form, than the pistol or sword, by which many of my countrymen in England precipitate themselves into the mansion of spirits, with how much confusion of heart and of face, no one has yet been permitted to return and declare;—but they have reason and morality for their guide, and when those are unattended to, it is not probable they would be made sensible of the

the first law and duty of existence, self-preservation, though one rose from the dead.

As a relieving subject, however, both for you and myself, I will mention to you, on this opportunity, somewhat of christenings:—five gold mohrs is the smallest fee thought of for the Padra's trouble in this instance—with the participation, moreover, of an entertainment that would put a lord-mayor's festival out of countenance: his Reverence must therefore have a fine time of it;—but gold mohrs are dealt about at Calcutta, as half crowns in England; and I leave you to determine with how good a grace a family of fortune or title could offer a clerical man, of respectable character, half a crown for his baptismal benediction.

The Gentoo holidays begin to-morrow—when I suppose I shall have news for you; and you may assure yourself, I shall be on the look out to do you pleasure.

I have seen the opening procession, and am much entertained by it. A certain number of Bramins, dressed after their peculiar manner, with

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with countenances such as Guido would have bestowed on a heavenly saint, led the way, a prodigious multitude of people following, with an idol superbly dressed with silver, gold, pearls, and the richest manufactures—which is carried about from street to street, till sufficiently exhibited, with drums, flutes, &c. &c. to the manifest delight of all parties, and then lodged in one of their pagodas, as a sacred, though temporary deposit; for it seems, Arabella, that on the last day of these religious raree-shews, all the idols are collected into a body, and, in a kind of pious frenzy, plunged into the Ganges, with thirty or forty persons swimming round them, until the noble act of sinking them to the bottom is effected, when they return with inconceivable satisfaction to their respective homes—and then proper persons are set to work to furnish them with new ones; the poor deluded creatures endangering their lives, though most expert swimmers; for the contest is, who shall be the happy one to perform this ceremony, conceiving it the highest honour of mortality to be aiding and assisting in drowning these divine works of their own hands.

It is, indeed, one of the grand articles of the Gentoo faith, that the waters of the rivers Ganges, Kishna, and Indus, have the

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sacred virtue of purifying those who bathe therein, from all pollutions and sins—they are therefore commanded by Brumma, (in his book of pious instructions, the Vidam) to dwell solely in the neighbourhood of some one of them—a tenet that is founded in good policy, by its prohibition of their migrating into distant countries; for it is remarkable, that the sacred rivers are so situated, that there is no part of India where the inhabitants have not an opportunity of freeing themselves from their sins by this mode of purgation;—the Ganges flowing through the kingdom of Bengal—the Kifna dividing the Carnatic from Golconda—and the Sindale, or Indus, washing Gugurate, and all the parts bordering upon Persia.—But they do not want any thing from abroad, having neither vanity nor ambition to gratify.

They are subject to early old-age, as I have mentioned on a former occasion; and have so little passion for vigorous exertions, that it is a favourite maxim with them, That it is better to sit than to walk, to lie down than to sit, to sleep than to wake, and that death is best of all.

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So soon as these holidays are over, the races will take place, and I am preparing to appear with *eclat* as my father's daughter.—I cost him large sums; but we cannot have the purchase without the price; and, I promise you, he has the full credit of his generosity to me.—He calls me his second self—I think he miscalls me, for I verily believe I am the first object of his care and kindness; nay more, that he is attentive to his own health and accommodation, chiefly on my account—and I wish very many young women, more deserving than myself, could say the same.

I have as yet given you only a very inadequate idea of the wealth, the numerous dependents, the power, and the importance of the Company on this commercial spot.—However, before I advance one step further, let me set before you the rapid progress they have made in all these acquisitions.

In the year 1600, their stock consisted of only £. 70,000—they nevertheless had the spirit to fit out four ships, which being successful, their prosperity augmented annually.

East-India stock sold from 360 to 500 per cent. in 1680—and a new Company was established in 1689—the old one re-established, and the two united, in 1700—and they agreed to give Government £. 400,000 a year, for four years, to remain uninterrupted, in 1769.

Such are the prosperous flights of commerce, when wisdom and justice holds the regulating rein;—but there are Phaetons every where; and no wonder, therefore, that this chariot of the sun has had its wheels taken off at certain periods.—Temptation is the fiery ordeal of virtue, and eastern bribes so portable, that it is almost a miracle to escape unhurt in some tender part—our fame or our conscience;—and let him that is qualified stand forth, and prove he is not included under this description of men.

I enquire every day about the arrival of ships; and find many do arrive; whence comes it then, Arabella, that you remember me not?

Mrs. Hartly has looked in upon me, and most severely condemns my close application to my pen.—I shall blind myself, she says, and tear my

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nerves to pieces.—She found me not only incorrigible, but I set such good and sufficient reasons before her, for the practice she impeached, that she left me, (having given me the information, that the races commence in three days) confessing it could not be discontinued. In three days, therefore, my dear Arabella, you attend me to the turf, where, if I do not break forth on the public eye with unusual spirit, I greatly fear the celebrity I can now boast, will attain its utmost meridian, and rapidly decline :—the preparation is important, and my friends must be consulted in every instance—I therefore beg leave to devote this whole day, at least, to the advancement of so great and necessary a design, without writing another word.

Here you have me again, beyond my own promise or intention, engaged in your service ;—but, you must know, I have met with a little surprise of a singular nature—an addition, Arabella, to our usual visitants.—I therefore said not a word respecting my appearance, but waited in quiet expectation of the young man's being announced to me, (as is the custom) previous to every notice I could condescend to take of him.

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The morning passed away, and he was not announced!—strange this—but true—if he is deemed worthy admission to our parties, why should he not have the usual passport to conversation?—But it is idle for me to mention such a circumstance—and yet, as he appeared a stranger, and has a face, of promise (for it is only doing him justice to say, understanding and good-nature are apparent in his countenance), I must think it wrong to leave me in my awkward situation respecting him.—If Mrs. Hartly thinks I shall make him of so much consequence as to enquire after him, she is mistaken; for I am too well aware of the inference, as it is the first thing of the kind that could be charged upon me.—I will order my palanquin, and steal a visit to the children I so much admire—their kind and innocent endearments will be doubly agreeable to me, now that I am in an absolute fit of dis humour with myself, and all the world—you, Arabella, alone excepted; my father, on this occasion, having shewn no more attention to my feelings, than the rest of my friends in this house.

So said, and so done—for, Arabella, before a single creature had an idea of such a thing, was

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I arrived at Hartly Bungilo, and as happy as a princess. Mrs. Rider, the children's *gouvernante*, received me in a most pleasing manner; and I for the first time, had leisure to observe a custom, with which I am delighted—it is the compliment paid to my country, in the taste at Calcutta in statuary; for instead of Neptune, his lady wife, and whole train of aquatic attendants, saluting your eye, out of their natural element, these Bungilo gardens are adorned by a Thomson, a Johnson, &c. &c. in a word, all the literary characters, to which the British empire has given birth; and a very useful effect those objects have upon the mind—for, by a natural and instantaneous combination of ideas, the Seasons were opened on my view; with Rasselas and his friends I traversed the Ethiopian regions; and so of the rest: nor did I ever, until that moment, know the fund of literary knowledge I am mistress of: and the utility must be general to the beholders;—for in youth it excites enquiry, in maturity, recollection: and it is my fixt and firm resolve, whenever I revisit England, (a nabobess, you will observe) to constitute my gardens an equal source of entertainment and instruction to all who are permitted to frequent them.—Mrs. Rider, perceiving how enthusiastic I was become, (for I absolutely answered her kind and polite questions in heroics)

heroics) said she was tempted to shew me Mrs. Hartly's closet—"Your visits, Madam," continued she, "have been so short, that I conceived there was not time to introduce you, where you would doubtless wish to spend some hours—for it is a cabinet of no less elegant than rational curiosities, and I have the honour to be trusted with the key, for the purpose of improving the minds of my young pupils, as occasion requires, with little lectures upon its contents."—I was impatient to be admitted; and the obliging Mrs. Rider led the way, without further preface or preparation.

I will never forgive Mrs. Hartly, for so long keeping me unacquainted with this proof of her fine taste, liberality of temper, admirable judgment, and elegant mode of spending her leisure time. The walls are covered with a pink paper from China, of the softest tint, as a ground to the portraits arranged around.—Here, Arabella, the poor Marchioness of Tavistock, from the hands of one of your first artists, sheds her unavailing tears, the tears of conjugal affection, and wounded peace, never more to be healed on this side the mansions of eternity. And here also the lovely and royal victim of female ambition, is drawn in her state of disconsolation, robbed of her crown, her fame, her children, of all that is dear

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dear and estimable in existence, except her beauty—but that is pourtrayed in a style of languor and softness, that relieves the feelings, by intimating her sufferings are near their termination.—Ah! my Arabella, who lost more, or had more to lose, than this sweet child of sorrow—transplanted from the nursery to a throne, and surrounded by dangers, against which she had never been taught to guard—the malign dangers of self-interest in a high-reaching and daring breast!—But I shall take an opportunity of speaking more largely on the subject, as also giving you the names of the other fair and amiable personages, selected by my distinguishing friend from all others, to ornament and embellish this invaluable apartment. One more, however, I must place before you—a whole length; a highly-finished piece—incribed, Arabella, thus,

“ Whose nice discernment, Virgil-like, is such,

“ Never to say too little, or too much.”

The drapery is well executed, the attitude happily chosen, the likeness masterly; the commentary on the *Genius of Shakspear*, which lies on a table in the back ground, a very pleasing termination of the whole.

I own, I feel myself proud, when my mind tells me this lady is my countrywoman; for to

her literary endowments are superadded gifts, that bespeak her one of the first favourites of Heaven—a heart replete with benevolence, and a hand prompt to bestow; in a word, she is an equal honour and blessing to the age in which she lives.

Mrs. Rider hinted to me (with great deference) that I should make my friends uneasy by my elopement; and, my father having a right to my unremitting attention, however I might choose to fancy he neglected me, I hesitated not to return;—where I found the family in amazement, and the young gentleman seemed to have adopted their feelings. I laughed the matter off with a good grace, and, professing myself infinitely obliged to Mrs. Rider, for her entertainment of me, retired, and was not again visible till supper.

At supper the races was the universal topic—and I find English jockies are well rewarded, if they visit Calcutta. There will be a ball on the evening of the first day, given by the Company, at the Court-house, to which all the Company's servants are entitled to free admission. So that, at least, there will be men enough; and, as the weather is remarkably favourable, fine sport is expected

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expected. Thus, you find, we Asiatics can contrive to vary our pleasures; and must be the envy of the European ladies, were they to read, that we of Calcutta live only to be adored, and that our gentlemen ask no higher happiness than permission to pay us their unending adoration.— You shall hear of me again in a few hours—at five o'clock in the afternoon we take our phaetons.—The race-ground is three miles in circuit, and, I imagine, is found a laborious heat in this country, for once round is all that is attempted.— But I will not prejudge an exhibition, of which I shall so soon become a glad spectator:—the horses are bred and attended at a great expence, as with you in England.—But I have done—adieu.

L E T T E R

LETTER XX.

Four in the morning.

I Am so delighted, and so fatigued—have so much to communicate, but, unlike your heroines in romance, am so unable to keep myself awake—that the moment my musketto curtains are ready, I must slide into repose; and may the dreams of the morning only equal the pleasures of the evening, and I shall not, except in your absence, have a wish ungratified.

I promised to address you again on paper, yesterday; but I little foresaw what business was in store for me.—Mrs. D——, as I imagined, goes with us, and came last night, at a late hour, to solicit Mr. Hartly's company in her phaeton—I looked at my father—who, turning to Mrs. Hartly, said, "I hope you understand, Madam, that I rely upon the honour of being your attendant beau on every public pleasurable occasion."—Mrs. Hartly bowed, and smiled assent.

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There sat the stranger speechless, though animated—and, until I had refused several gay offers, spoke not; when, in a half whisper, the spirit at length moved him to ask, if he might aspire—and a look of meaning was left to finish the sentence.

My father said he should be most happy, and Mrs. Hartly was warm in his recommendation—I, therefore, could not decline an offer, I nevertheless scarcely knew how to accept, as he remained the John in the cloud, every body is deemed until they are introduced.

Having opened his mouth for the first time, in my presence, with success, he began to take a part in the conversation; and I soon discovered two things—yes, Arabella, two, unless I am greatly deceived, namely, that he is a well-bred youth, and not without the secret desire of becoming one of my most obedient humble servants.—But my obedient humble servants are already so numerous, that I do not believe I have room for one more upon the list.—I nevertheless think you would plead in his behalf, if you was to see him: he is—so in fact like yourself in his person, has so agreeable a voice, so happy a manner, and fifty other valuable accomplishments, that, was I in a land where

where love was of longer duration before it terminates in matrimony, I will not say but I might be in some danger of listening to him;—but such is the custom at Calcutta, that, before I shall be certain my affections are really engaged, or that I am likely to be able to prevail on myself to fix for life, he will be snapped up, if he has brought an unengaged heart among us, (which is to me, however, a doubtful point) by some female or other, who regulates both her feelings and her conduct by the established standard. I shall, therefore, enter into nothing more than a very slight acquaintance with him.—But the races, perhaps, you ask—when are you to hear of the races?

In the first place, Arabella, allow me to tell you, (for it is a proper prelude to what follows) not a phaeton on the turf was more noticed than mine—my horses are Armenian, well trained and bitted—my reins elegant—my own dress becoming—the dress of my Seapoys magnificent—my attendant beau the envy of the men, and the admiration of the women:—and could any happiness be more complete than mine?

My father, however, played the renegade, and exchanged his place in the phaeton, with a gentleman on horseback:—he generally kept near us
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his eyes, what paternal approbation did they not sparkle with ! though he seemed to forbid their saying too much ; and my beau had a dignity in his visible satisfaction, that proved him to be of European birth and education—of taste and sentiment. For, however little he said, he was to me the best male companion I have met with at Calcutta, the Governor and Mr. Hartly excepted.

The spectators were numerous—many of which were Moors ; and observe, Arabella, (though that piece of information is in no degree connected with my present subject) that the Moors of Indostan, often called Mongols, are of the faith of Omar, the Turkish Mahometans of the faith of Hali.

The horses were led to the starting chair, four in number ; and the jockies, distinguished by the colour of their turbans, prepared themselves for the word of command—the word, Arabella, was given, and they went off full speed—my eyes followed them, not wholly impartially, for my father had declared his wishes, and his wishes were adopted by me. Our favourite was the successful adventurer ; but, between ourselves, such are the disadvantages of climate, that one good English post-horse would infallibly have born off the prize.

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We were refreshed at the Governor's, in our return, with tea, coffee, &c. and from thence went home to sleep, and to adorn ourselves for the ball.

Now do not suspect me of minding such a thing, for I only mention it for its singularity—for to me it was beyond measure singular, that the handsome insensible I had honoured so abundantly, in the face of all my admirers, should not have the politeness to ask the favour of my hand for the evening—insomuch that I resolved, if he attempted it on my appearing in the ball-room, I would refuse him.

Note, Arabella, if you take it in your head to wish to know the dresses of the company, either male or female, I shall refer you to the fashions in England in their highest and most expensive state of ornament and decoration. For, except in the article of mourning, (which is chiefly the beautiful cassimires, which are the produce and manufactures of the East) there is little difference between the appearance of a fine lady at Bengal, and a fine lady in London—for fine ladies in London have found out the elegance of enwrapping themselves in shawls; and those treasures of the mine, and of the ocean, diamonds and pearls, are well known
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in England, though not in such profusion; for those displayed at the ball-room would, moderately speaking, have purchased half a dozen principalities.

I can, however, at length justify the propriety of Doily's behaviour (the name of my new acquaintance) from finding he knew, though I did not, the etiquette of balls at Calcutta; for you must know the Eastern ladies, in order to preserve the peace and good order of society, as well as to promote the felicity of the evening, never dance above two country dances with one and the same gentleman—accordingly, you will perceive, had Doily taken advantage of my want of information, the trees of destruction would, the ensuing morn, have been witness to the bloodshed, of which I should have been the innocent, he the guilty cause.

The youth, however, kept close to my father the whole evening, (on which account, I doubt not, it was that I was taken in a soft moment) when, with a diffidence and respect the Eastern air will soon cure him of, he besought the honour of going down *one* dance with me—though on recollection, he did not arrive at this high point of courage, until my father had sanctioned his presumption

sumption by one of his speaking smiles. He approached me, bowed, and bowed again—when, (could you have supposed it?) my hand, without the concurrence of my heart, was delivered up to him, and he had conducted me to my seat, before I was sensible of my breach of resolution respecting him.

In short, my sweet friend, if nabobism was not the stumbling-block of my ambition, and flattery here the daily incense of the sex, there is no saying what might happen; for Doyly's flattery is of a most insinuating kind—his eyes are full of expression, and the language of good sense flows from his lips;—but, I have a vow, that stares my conscience in the face, on the bare mention of Doyly's winning talents—and it is well I have: for, instead of the ceremony of appointing a distant day, and all the dangling visits paid in consequence thereof, you are liable, at Calcutta, to be plundered of your consent any evening of your life; and, without time to collect yourself, much less to retract—by the Padra's being one of the company, may be induced to give him a claim to twenty gold mohrs, before he takes his leave; and so, my good Arabella, being married in haste, be left to repent at leisure.

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The only remedy for which evil is, that, instead of the mortification so often experienced in England, on the matrimonial disenchantment, you have innumerable methods of filling up your time agreeably, and are not less beloved by the world, for loving your husband no longer.

After what I have already written of magnificent entertainments, it must be unnecessary to mention, that our supper and sideboard were magnificent.

The ball-room, at the Court-house, is spacious, and finely illuminated—the attendance princely—and the ladies angels.

Amongst the rest young Edwin bow'd,
But never talk'd of love :

of which picture, Edmund Doyly is the original, as you will discover in the course of my epistles.

Watson's Works, a place for building bugeros and small floops, (the road to which lies across the esplanade, to the river, in an oblique direction) is some miles from Calcutta—and to Watson's Works, in order to see the launching of a large bugero,

bugero, built on a new construction, we repaired yesterday, after taking our tea; and do but conceive the *eclat* of half a dozen, or more, of these Eastern barges, all freighted with elegant parties, gliding down the stream together, the oars beating time to the notes of the clarinets and oboes.

Music has charms, says the poet, to sooth a savage breast—what power must it then have over a humanised one, and especially in an elegant bugero!—the heavens the most glorious canopy I ever beheld, and the surface of the water crystalline beyond all imagination—the zephyrs!—but I will trust myself with no further description of it, for there is fascination in the recollection of the scene—nor have you any thing in England to help you to the faintest idea of it.

Doyly must, moreover, be brought into the fore-ground—his person is so pastoral, and his sensibility so oriental—had he the Mogul's diadem, he would place it, I am confident, upon my head, and, though entitled to all the privileges of a Mussulman, live for me alone.

But, poor youth! he has, it seems, his fortune to make; and most precarious, of course, are his prospects of advancement; the arrow of disease

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can impede the accomplishment of the best-conceived designs, arrest the arm of skill, and bring on almost instantaneous dissolution.—I enter, Arabella, into all his delicacies—I feel the fetters with which he is bound, and am sorry my father is so encouraging to him, lest a hope should receive birth therefrom—only to expire.

The Works are admirable, and the launch gave universal satisfaction—and so profusely were we entertained on the occasion with loll shrub, and every desirable article, that we returned applauding the spirit and politeness of our entertainer.

An accident, however, took place, which will render water parties ineligible to me in future. The beauty of the evening drew all the company upon deck—and a gentleman in the next bugero to ours, having drank too freely, was noisy and troublesome in his compliments, and so abundantly did he warm with his subject, that, regardless of all danger, he advanced to the unrailed part, and insisted upon the honour of kissing my fair hand. I was not inclined to comply; for though the rowers are dexterous, I could not help apprehending it would bring the bugeros too close together for our perfect safety:—the company were, however,

however, of a different opinion; and, ashamed to persist in fears that were peculiar to myself, I leaned forward, supported by poor Doyly, to gratify him—when, to the equal surprise and offence of the whole party, he attempted to salute me. Fired at this boldness, Doyly repulsed him with indignation; and in the same instant was pulled overboard—and your valiant friend most opportunely fainted away.

He fell not, however, unrevenged—for the Bacchanalian, a man of large fortune, had his arm somehow entangled, so that they went soufe together, and were both fished up by the dexterous Gentoos, (the water being, as it were, from their diurnal immersions, their natural element) before I was restored to life.

I looked anxiously around me, and, from my then feelings, should certainly have relapsed, if I had not beheld my half-drowned champion at a distance. The company, as soon as it appeared no real harm had been done, very sensibly interposed, and a general reconciliation succeeded.

Mr. Doyly having changed his dress, joined us at supper.—“ I think Sophia,” said my father, when he entered the saloon, “ I have not heard

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you thank this knight for his stroke of Quixotism in your defence—he was near paying very dear for it—What reward, my young friend, shall we bestow upon you ?”

“ The honour,” replied the gallant Doyly, “ of kissing the hand I preserved from outrage.”

I could not forbear telling him, so unusual was his vivacity, on this honour being granted him, that he appeared much benefited by his plunge into the holy river—the waters of the Ganges being affirmed by the Gentoos to possess, as I have already mentioned, wonderful virtues.

I expect horrible visions, in consequence of an incident, that has however gone off with astonishing happiness to all parties—for let me not attempt to sleep, until I inform you, that at one o’clock, a chit-bearer arrived post with a letter to Doyly, consisting only of these words :—“ If the enclosed is accepted, I shall then, and then only, have the courage to behold Miss and Mr. Goldsborne again.” And the peace-offering, Arabella, was no less than an appointment to a private secretaryship, he had instantly obtained him ; an introduction, of all others, the most promising for making a fortune. And may every promise it is fraught

fraught with be fulfilled, though I should never live to know it!

You may be sure this handsome action met with due commendation—and Mr. Hartly said, that if Mrs. D—— would permit him to choose for her, Mr. M. should be the man: for, as an antidote to intoxication, he must observe, that when he was sober, his heart was liberal, and his manners pleasing. I felt for Mrs. D——; but I might have spared my feelings—she received Mr. Hartly's speech with great good-humour, as a friendly jest—and begged he would give her leave to choose for herself. Doyly is much pleased with this lady; and the fact is, she wins unspeakably on the approbation of us all—and, in every thing but one, I sincerely wish her merit may be rewarded.

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LETTER XXI.

MRS. D—— has new merit in my sight : our phaetons drew up close to each other on the race-ground, and we had chatted together for a few minutes, when a young fellow, superbly mounted, saluted her with his hat, and asked where he should find her son—she directed him to a distant spot, where I perceived a youth with a plain person, but apparently well satisfied with himself, that put a period to all my nonsensical apprehensions, for he could not be much more than fifteen : an age so unsuitable to mine, as to be alone sufficient security against my father's forming the design I had suspected.

“Is that gentleman your son,” said I, “Madam?” with an emotion that marked, I am afraid, a rather uncivil surprise. “It is Mr. D——’s son,” replied she, “and as such I acknowledge him—for though his father, on some trifling offence, forgot he was his child, by the fortune he left me, I shall always conceive myself bound to
I provide

provide for him."—Perceiving I was about to compliment her upon so generous a way of thinking, she added, "there are duties," my dear young lady, "I need not inform you, which it is a reproach to us not to comply with, though no positive institution.—I am only the agent of Providence in this business—and should ill deserve the blessings I enjoy (she sighed, Arabella, as if some blessing, nevertheless, was unattained) if I forgot his orphan claims to my protection."

If this is not greatness of soul, it is something vastly like it, according to my ideas. What claims could this child have to Mrs. D——'s favour—when his father was the enemy of her peace, and the tyrant of her existence? It is a sweet feature in her character, and shall be revered by me.

Doyly's eyes sparkled with approbation, whilst she uttered the words I have written for your refusal; and I shall only observe upon the occasion, the different conduct of the world, in different instances—for, had Mrs. D—— acted as thousands would have done, towards this miserable-looking boy, the story of her unkindness would have been in every one's mouth—and they would have doubled her fortune in their report, for the pleasure

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pleasure of doubling her guilt. But when her liberality of mind has so honourably displayed itself, even at Calcutta no one was found forward, on the mention of her name, to give her such well earned praise.

The gentlemen pronounced this day's sport much superior to yesterday's; but I cannot say I discovered any such thing: however, Arabella, I discovered, what gave me great concern, that with the amusement of the turf, the spirit of betting has been imported at Bengal, and the madness is, who shall be first undone.

We passed the night a second time at the Courthouse; but the ball was a compliment of the governor's, and well conducted:—and thus our races ended.

The next amusement is the theatre—which would have opened sooner, but from some necessary repairs in the scenery, which were not known to be wanting, until it was too late to accomplish them in the desired time.

My Bramin has been here this morning, and shakes his head at the gay life I lead;—and, to own

the truth to you, Arabella, I am not quite clear, but I have at this moment the seeds of some alarming disease about me:—may you never experience the misery of unstrung nerves! or your charming spirits become the victim of burning suns, or baneful dews!—My heart dies within me, from the apprehension of what my dear father will suffer, if the mementos of my mortality, which now hang about me, should increase. Shattered constitutions, expiring friends, last adieus, and melancholy regrets, I cannot tell wherefore, wholly occupy my thoughts—it may be only fatigue; or, perhaps, this letter will contain the ultimate levities of my pen. Be assured, however, I shall depart, if my hour is now come, in the true faith of an European—the faith confirmed by all around me—that there is no climate more salubrious than Britain—no people more blessed—no days more pleasurable, or nights more tranquil, than her temperate air bestows.—Farewell, my Arabella!—Rapid is the progress of disease in India. I now have just sufficient remaining strength to bid you farewell—and it is not improbable, that by this hour to-morrow morning I may be in eternity.

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I must write on while I have the power.—Mrs. Hartly, as is her never-failing kind custom, opened my door to wish me a good night. I exerted myself to the utmost, that the repose of her and her family might not be interrupted—it will be time enough in the morning, to make my friends wretched.

Friendly attachments, Arabella, are great obstacles to piety: the passage to eternity is, I grant you, an awful one; but the thoughts, I am convinced, linger on temporal ground, much more from the ties of affection, than the dread of our future condition. Those whose lives have been upright, and who have, in repeated instances, been the care of Providence, dare not doubt of blessedness hereafter; and those who have a just sense of the efficacy of repentance, will have confidence therein, and, of course, due resignation.

My father, how will he learn to survive me? O could I recall my error in one respect, a most intolerable weight would be taken off my heart. Doyly I can point out a comforter for, and a successor in
his

his tendernefs; a fifter of Mrs. Hartly's, who, with twenty times my mental merit, is every way my fuperior in perfon alfo; but I am well aware it will be fome time before the young man will behold her with my eyes. My father, my deareft father! (wicked creature as I have been) who fhall comfort him?—I grow worfe and worfe, and muft, I fear, fubmit to medical regulation.

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LETTER XXII.

How fortunate it is for us both, that the East-India packets arrive not every day; for my last letter would have wounded your mind, without any benefit to me.—But I will tell you all that has happened, in my usual narrative manner.

Doyly, I am told, has behaved himself very well during my illness, which, Arabella, was short, but most severe, and has left me so totally emaciated, that this is the first time, for three weeks, that I have been able to resume my pen. He waited whole hours in an anti-chamber, for the purpose of enabling himself to worry my physicians with enquiries how I went on; which is considered as a high compliment to the patient: and passed his nights in supporting my father. Thank Heaven, I am restored to their wishes, and that Hartly-House is delivered from an absolute nuisance of friendly salams, on my account.

My dear Mrs. D——, (for dear I shall evermore hold her) from a knowledge of Mrs. Hartly's condition, which rendered her unfit for so fatiguing

ing a task, was my regulating nurse. "O fly, Madam," said I to her, when she first presented herself, "fly; this is assuredly the chamber of death!"

"I would not knowingly rush upon destruction," said she, "or hazard my life in a common cause—but I love you better than a life of dishonour, which mine would be, if I forsook my friend in her hour of need:—commit yourself, therefore, as an obligation I will ever acknowledge, to my care and kindness, and know this is not the first service of friendship I have successfully engaged in—Is it not a double life I am anxious to preserve?"

"O Madam," cried I, "are we alone?"—"We are," replied Mrs. D——: "then, if you can divest yourself of apprehensions from my breath, kneel by me, and compose my mind by one solemn promise." "I kneel, Miss Goldsborne," said she, "in the presence of him, I trust, who will preserve you, and pledge myself to perform whatever you ask of me, if in my power."—"My father, Madam, if he survives me, will you be the sustaining friend of my father?—O dearest Madam, I deserve your hate—your severest displeasure, instead of the affection you bear me;—for I have

have dreaded an event, as an evil, that will alone enable me to die in peace.—Wedded to my mother's memory, his heart is for ever in her coffin, and in this state has he been left hours, by the girl, whose felicity was his sole object, to tender melancholy and unavailing lamentation.—What dire enemy of his peace and mine, suggested the idea to me, that it was meritorious in him to be miserable, and filial virtue in me to rejoice in his misery!"—"You must not agitate yourself, in this manner," said the amiable Mrs. D——: "nor shall you be dissembled with on this occasion;—doubt not my good-will to relieve your father's mind; for, perhaps, that good-will has great share in my present conduct. Perhaps, Sophia, all amiable as you are, you would never have been dear to my heart, had you not been Mr. Goldsborne's child. Be composed, therefore, and rest assured, that Providence will not forsake so worthy a man—he will be consoled, though both you and I were no more."

"Let me have pen and ink," said I, eagerly, "before my reason is impaired—I will write but three words, and you shall then do as you please by me:" a pen and ink was brought me by a poor Gentoo girl I had been kind to, who weeping, took Mrs. D——'s place at my bedside, to give me her best assistance. I wrote as follows,

"Pardon, dear Sir, pardon your child, who, with the prospect of danger before her, is most solicitous for your welfare.—You are alone in the world, and who shall administer consolation to you when I am no more? The blessed spirit of my mother (if the dead are conscious of the actions of the living) is interested in the cause I have at heart:—prove your resignation to Heaven, by withdrawing your affections from the ashes of her you have so long survived, and make atonement for the worst sin of my life (wishing an union between you and the only woman on earth capable of soothing your sorrows, might never take place): and reconcile me, dearest Sir, to myself, by promising me you will solicit her acceptance of you;—and be, in my last moment, what I have ever found you, the kindest of fathers to Sophia Goldsborn."

"Take this," said I, to the poor Gentoo girl, "take it instantly to my father, and tell him I shall not sleep, until I receive his answer."

She flew back, with these words, hastily inscribed with a pencil:

"Sleep, my beloved child, thy afflicted father conjures thee to sleep in peace:—he will observe your request, he will religiously observe it, as he would

would a voice from Heaven. But if you wish him happiness, endeavour to live; for his happiness most essentially depends upon the life of his Sophia—who, living or dead, shall regulate his future conduct by her wishes.”

Mrs. D—— was a silent spectator of this scene, and appeared alone anxious for my composure:—she gave me my medicines with her own hand; and for eight and forty hours my condition was deemed hopeless—a crisis then took place—and I will exhaust my strength no more on this occasion, for have I not told you I am restored?

Mrs. Hartly and Doyly have oppressed Mrs. D—— with thanks—my father has alone thanked her, in the happiness he displays on my recovery—I feel for her a daughter’s tenderness, a daughter’s gratitude, and look forward with rapture to the period, that will give me the name also—for, Arabella, if preserving my life (which, under Providence, she has done) at the hazard of her own, is not a maternal act, I know not what deserves that name;—and I will love her, dearly love her, for her mental resemblance of her

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Must never more return.

I cannot write longer at present,

So adieu!

S. G.

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LETTER XXIII.

But love, the disturber of high and of low.

MY father and Mrs. D——, without speaking a single word to each other on the subject, are certain, from the train into which I have brought things, of their intentions. But Doyly, though he dances round me on my recovery, with ardent delight, breathes not a syllable to me of the state of his affections, or the colour of his wishes:—teizing creature! I will, Arabella, think (that, is write) no more of him.

You have heard of alligators, (a pretty contrast for the gentle Doyly!) and their depredations, but it seems, unless you throw yourself in their way, in their natural element, the human species have nothing to fear from them, whilst living.

But when the Gentoos, as is one of their pious customs, lay their dead (or, what is more shocking, their dying friends) at low-water mark, that the flowing tide of the sacred Ganges may bury, and purify them from all their sins—the alligators
make,

make, together with vultures, and other animals of prey, their feast on them.

The tide, in general, does its office—but not till after the above-described circumstance has taken place—a nuisance, and outrage upon the feelings, I wonder the police do not correct—for besides the appearance, so dreadful to humanity, of mangled limbs and headless trunks, which are daily seen by all who pass that way, impurities must impregnate the air, to augment its native putridity at certain periods, and endanger the lives of the inhabitants of this place.

This disposition of the dead, is a practice confined to a certain number of casts or classes only—for there are other casts, as you may read in the European newspapers, that burn the bodies of their departed friends or relatives, and preserve their ashes with great piety. And of this number are those wives, who, with a degree of heroism, that, if properly directed, would do honour to the female world, make an affectionate and voluntary sacrifice of themselves upon the funeral pile of their departed husbands:—it is true, there have been instances of their shewing reluctance—but those instances seldom occur.

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No bride ever decked herself out with more alacrity or elegance, than the women about to give this last proof of their conjugal attachment—and they are, no doubt, sanctified to all intents and purposes by the priest's fiat, and pass immediately into the presence of Brumma, to receive their reward. This mode of sacrifice, is, however, attended with much expence, or human bonfires would be unending exhibitions; and hence the custom, it is presumable, of burying them in the water;—and so eager are they to obtain this sacred purification, for those who are past recovery (and, by the way, their superstition forbids their trying the means, in many instances, for their recovery, under the idea of opposing the will of Providence) that they are conveyed with all imaginable piety, and often with their own consent, to the banks of the river, and there fitted, by its rising waves, for their translation from earth to heaven.

You have also read of the barbarous exhibition of men, suspended from heights, by hooks run through the fleshy part of their shoulders, and stuck on machines barbed with spikes:—these acts are acts of choice, in order to restore a poor excommunicated wretch to the privileges of his cast, or class—for, on flagrant misbehaviour, they are

are excluded, such as eating forbidden things, or other similar breaches of their religious duties. And those who survive this display of what they will do and suffer to atone for their faults, are reinstated in all their forfeited claims, and their sins are not only forgiven, but forgotten for ever.

I asked my Bramin, on his making me his congratulation on my recovery, to tell me what transmigrations (according to the best of his opinion) would have been my fate, if I had died, as was expected, in my illness.—He smiled—blushed, I think—and gave me to understand, that I should never have lost the power of pleasing, because I have not exercised that power unworthily in my human shape.—“I suppose then,” said I, “I may conclude, from your complaisance, that I should have figured away as a cockatoo, or sung myself into somebody’s good graces in the form of a minho—or, perhaps, have been honoured with the person (if I may so call it) of a Bramine kite.”—He shook his head, and made me believe it very probable, that, as I had so long been worshipped as a lady, I might be favoured with divine honours, when I commenced one of the feathered race.—I am amused by these little fallies—for well does my Bramin know, I respect his religious tenets, though I do not subscribe to them; and can

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never think myself entitled to laugh at any faith that is seriously adopted, and piously adhered to.

I, in the conclusion, however, told him, that, unless I lost my consciousness with my form, I should be happy to know myself under his protection—for I really think so highly of you, said I, that you are deemed by me, one of the kindest of the kind people to which you belong. He promised me to observe every *lovely* creature, (that was his word) if he survived me, in order to accomplish my wish, and render himself happy by being useful to me.

Doyly absented himself suddenly this morning—the dinner and tea have passed away, and no Mr. Doyly:—it is very well—but if he supposes these unaccounted for withdrawals, are the way to try my heart, he will soon discover he is mistaken.

I find, to speak the truth, no principles so steady, or manners so uniform, in all India, as Mrs. D——'s. She has subdued pride, vanity, and affectation, or she could not be the woman she is.

And,

And, from the happy effects of my indisposition, I shall ever rejoice in the recollection of it; for it was the only means on earth of opening my eyes to my duty, or of teaching my heart to perform it.

Doyly, with a face of despair, presented himself at supper. And was rallied, I thought (notwithstanding all my private wrath) unopportunately, upon his having been an absentee, contrary to his usual custom.—His reply died on his lips, and I did not dare to meet his eyes, from misgivings of which I could not divine the cause.

What, Arabella, can have befallen him?—Has some nabobess made overtures to him, he is compelled from pre-engagement to decline?—Can he be sentenced to forego the height of heaven, and toil out his existence in the diamond mines?—Has he blighted his little rising prospects at the gaming table, that bane of prosperity to thousands?—O Doyly, softly let me speak it—could my fortune repair the breaches in your's, how immediately, if I was mistress of it, should peace be restored to your breast! And fatal experience, your own natural good-nature and good sense, would
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secure you in future from falling—In vain did I seek to read the cause of his sorrows, in both his and my father's countenance; I am retired to my chamber, agitated by conjectures.—Surely, common friendship might have induced them to deliver me from the pangs of suspense, and the creations of a disturbed imagination.—Mrs. Hartly taps at my door—she will relieve me from doubts that torture me, and fears that threaten I know not what.

The only misfortune I was unsuspecting of, has befallen me.—Doyly sails for Europe to-morrow, with some important dispatches, which, from the nature of his new appointment, are entrusted to his care.

Alas, Arabella, who shall hereafter venture to say an event is prosperous! when that most apparently so, thus proves, in the person of poor Doyly, the cause of his greatest mortification. The honour, or the danger, of his voyage, which shall I teach my mind to dwell upon? I can anticipate, though I cannot follow, your advice. But what says Shakespear, that great master of human nature?

Let

Let no one judge of love but those who feel it.

Beware then, my dear girl! how you dictate decisively in a case, that never was, and perhaps never can be your own.

What medicine can soften the bosom's keen smart,
What Lethe can banish the pain?

Good night, I will no longer expose myself.

He breakfasted with us, and my father desired Mrs. Hartly to tell me to bid him adieu, on his embarkation for England—But what adieu can I bid the poor fellow, that will not betray my tenderness for him? His looks, during the whole period we were together, spoke a language my heart too well understood. Youth of my best approbation! companion of my pleasanter hours! whose congenial taste and sentiment has afforded me so much delight! worthy young man! farewell! for ever farewell! Tell my Arabella all my imputed consequence—paint your own partial estimate of my little merits in their strongest colourings—tell her I possess wealth, fame, admiration—every thing that is desirable, but, happiness, and that I alone labour to support existence, for the repose of my father. This was, however, my mental soliloquy,

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loquy, not my address. I shall alarm you, Arabella, by this avowal of my regret, but censure me not, even in your most private thoughts. A friend of either sex, at Calcutta, that is a native of England, and of English education, who can be grave without solemnity, and gay without levity, is a treasure beyond all Golconda can bestow. I will, however, shake off this ill-timed softness, and learn to submit myself with a good grace to all the changes and chances of my destiny; but we can bear our wants much better than our losses, which is a cutting, because an applicable remark on my own situation. Our last hour, however, is not yet come, for he will drink tea with us.

He is gone, Arabella; and silence was the only language of adieu between us. He eat not, he drank not, he sighed not, but suddenly looking on his watch, and finding he must depart, he kissed both Mrs. Hartly's hands, touched one of mine, barely touched it, with his lips, and left us—never more, perhaps, to return!

The good-natured Mrs. Hartly's eyes were suffused by tears. "There is not," said she, "his equal, for his age, in all the East. He has all the promise

promise about him of being a great man; but for my part, well as I wish him, I could not have prevailed upon myself to advise him, as your father did, to cross the ocean, and deprive us of his agreeable society.

Every thing but this I supported with fortitude, but the mention of my father's name, as the author of my distress; there was no concealing my feelings! "And, did my father, Madam," I stopped, sensible of my error. Mrs. Hartly, however, as perfectly understood me, as if I had wrote a volume upon the occasion—and said every soothing, every possible word, that benevolence and friendship could suggest—and led me to my apartment. My best prayers, Arabella, will attend him, but I will mention him no more.

Your's,

S. G.

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LETTER XXIV.

MY Bramin—how sweet is religion, as described by him!—the love of the Deity, and the love of our fellow-creatures, its fundamentals—and peace and charity the superstructure.

For love, this young priest affirms, refines the sentiment, softens the sensibility, expands our natural virtues, extinguishes every idea of jealousy or competitorship, and unites all created beings in one great chain of affection and friendship.

“So far,” replied I, “so far, my good Sir, for the happy side of the prospect;—but what cure have you for the wounds your sensibility must receive by the dissolution of the tenderest ties of friendship, the survival of your dearest connections?”

“We resolve every event,” said the amiable Bramin, into the divine appointment, and dare not repine.”

“This

"This is very delightful doctrine in theory, Sir," returned I.—"And salutary in practice, Madam," replied he, "as the man before you is a living testimony;—for that he was born a Bramin, he submits to, as the will of Heaven—and that you are the loveliest of women, he acknowledges with pious resignation."

I was astonished—Mrs. Hartly was silent—and the Bramin retired, with more emotion than quite accorded with his corrected temper, as if he felt he had said too much.

Wretch that I am, Arabella! this confession, which I shall ever remember with pain, did I, in the idle gaiety of my heart, ardently aspire after.—O, how I lament, that young men and women (with few exceptions, I am afraid) cannot form a friendship of the tranquil and liberal kind, a friendship that ends not in an exclusion of all other attachments, I mean as to precedence!—A life of voluntary celibacy, an unsocial state, which nature revolts at, is the life of a Bramin—for the joys of conversation surpass all other joys, they are the peculiar blessing of the human race. And you find Arabella, the mental claims are the same in all—for, that I am a conversible being, is the attraction with this Gentoo devotee.—I therefore

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therefore at length see, and subscribe to, the wisdom of confining their amusements to their pagodas, and their public shews; for they have hearts made for society, and, having once tasted the pleasures social intercourse gives, must pass their days in secretly condemning, what they openly profess to approve, the misconceived tenets of Brumma—for I am clear, the wonderful and enchanting gift of speech was not bestowed upon us, to be sons and daughters of solitude.

Doyly's departure has only been a prelude to the loss of our Governor, and every creature is plunged into disconsolation. Not a bugero will be unoccupied—it is the last proof of their heart-felt respect they can shew him; and you may judge of the preparation, when I tell you, it is an absolute voyage they have resolved upon, to do him honour.

The Company it is affirmed by those who appear well informed, will, by this event, be deprived of a faithful and able servant; the poor,

of a compassionate and generous friend; the genteel circles, of their best ornament; and Hartly House of a revered guest.

He has three times, it seems, stood forth, in his late public station, the worthy character I found him—and his plans of government have procured him the repeated thanks and plaudits of the Company.—But,

Envy will merit, as its shade, pursue.

A more uniform good man, or so competent a judge of the advantages of the people, he will not leave behind him; nor possibly can a successor be transmitted, of equal information and abilities. For, Arabella, he has made himself master of the Persian language, that key to the knowledge of all that ought to constitute the British conduct in India, or can truly advance the British interests.—But I am getting upon political ground; and will only add, as the friends of this gentleman observe, that, as the sun is often obscured, without lessening its brightness, so the clouds, which have so unaccountably gathered around his fame, *may* I say, (*will* they say) be one day universally and ultimately dispelled.

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The whole place is engaged in adieu, and Mrs. H—— will be accompanied to England (for the Governor sails in a different ship) by a Mrs. M——, who has been presented with 500 gold mohrs (a thousand pounds) in return for her complaisance in making the voyage with her. Two black girls, and a steward, are Mrs. H——'s attendants; and the state cabin and round-house will be entirely devoted to her use.

My father wishes me to make one in Mrs. D——'s bugero; but I think it impossible I can comply with that wish—so recently as poor Doyly has quitted us, and so distressing as all bidding adieu is to the feelings of your

S. G.

LETTER XXV.

IT is over, and we behold our Governor no more.—He would have taken leave of his friends at Diamond Point, but they would not hear of such a thing—their bugeros were well stored with provisions, and every requisite, &c. so with pendants flying, and bands of music, to the last man and instrument to be found in Calcutta, they attended him to Sawger, the extremity of the river.

He was, moreover, saluted by nineteen guns from every Indiaman at Bengal, and the general voice, in all quarters, continues to be, they ne'er shall look upon his like again.

They returned not, Arabella, until they beheld the packet and Indiaman sail out of soundings; in the former of which was the Governor, and in the latter his wife: and then slowly, and with solemn music, made for Diamond Point, where Palanquins, to an incredible number, were in waiting to convey them to their respective homes.

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I passed the period of their absence at Hartly Bungilo—my father not only consenting to my declining the party, from a hint of Mrs. Hartly's, that the fatigue would be too much for me, but laying his injunctions upon me, not to think of going;—and Mrs. Rider, and the children, were unremitting in their endeavours to amuse me, and keep up my spirits.

But I found time for meditation; and the result is, that I shudder at the narrowness and illiberality of my past conduct—For what but narrowness and illiberality of heart, could for a moment have incited me to suppose, that my father's union with an amiable accomplished woman, would weaken his affection for me, or throw his conjugal faith and tenderness into shade?

O Arabella, Arabella, admirably does Rochefoucault distinguish, when he affirms, “that there is much more of self-love, than love for the object, in jealousy;”—for, if we love truly (I am now convinced) in the character of either husband, wife, child, or friend, the *happiness* of those we love will infallibly be the first-rate consideration with us;—and that I was not aware of the benefits that must accrue, from having an assisting and relieving partner in the business of promoting my father's

father's tranquillity, is a crime of my nature I will not easily pardon.

'I intreat you will be very particular in transmitting me all that passes in your interview with poor Doyley: this request originates solely from common good wishes towards him—for would it not be an impeachment of the friendship I bear his *friends*, to be unmindful of his fate?—not that I bar your conclusions, be they what they may, so you only do me the justice to believe I am,

Your's, most affectionately,

S. G.

LETTER

LETTER XXVI.

HENCEFORTH, Arabella, you are to consider me in a new point of view.—Ashamed of the manners of modern Christianity, (amongst the professors of which acts of devotion are subjects of ridicule, and charity, in all its amiable branches, a polite jest) I am become a convert to the Gentoo faith, and have my Bramin to instruct me *per diem*.

What a sweet picture would the pen of Sterne have drawn of this young man's person! But such is the European narrowness of sentiment, that if I was to attempt to do it, you would instantly conclude,

I love the precepts for the teacher's sake.

But love, I can assure you, is not so spontaneous an effect (in general) of a friendship between the sexes, in India as in England; the object of admiration being mental charms, which bid defiance to decay.

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The Mahometans have their public processions as well as the Gentoos; but the colour of their minds, so unlike that amiable people, is displayed therein—for the Gentoos dance, sing, and pay their enraptured homage to their idols with benevolent aspects—whereas the custom of the sons of Omar is to exhibit sham-fights, as they are called, though often productive of very fatal and barbarous consequences—inasmuch that, on my first knowledge of the light and darkness these religious shews are to each other, I felt myself in danger of becoming a *Braminate*, though all the wealth of Indostan could not bribe me to become a Mahometan.

And striking, indeed, are the opposite tenets of these opposite people—for the Gentoos, with a liberality of temper for which I shall ever honour them, bestow souls without number, and existence without end, on both sexes;—the proud mussulmen make a monopoly of immortality in their own persons—for which piece of unauthorized daring, I am unable to restrain my indignation towards them, nor would I honour even the nabob himself with an exception, but that I have hopes of his apostacy—for, Arabella, whenever the time shall arrive, when either your charms or mine are destined to convince him he

has

has a heart to fall a victim thereto, he will not, he cannot persist in refusing us a soul also.—Then his wealth pleads so powerfully for him, and his high-sounding title, and his magnificence altogether—that one has very little to say in his disfavour.—If you have made the observation, that the wicked tyrant Surajah Dowla, the destroyer of the English at Calcutta, is styled a Soubah, you may perhaps wish to understand the difference between a Soubah and a Nabob.—The Moors, or Mahometan princes, are said to have introduced the division of India into provinces, or, as they are called in their language, soubahs; which provinces, being of such immense extent as to form whole empires, were subdivided into nabobships, every nabob of course being immediately accountable to his soubah for his conduct and government. But in process of time, from internal commotions and irrepressible invasions, both soubahs and nabobs became almost independent of the Mogul himself, or at least held their dominions under him by the sole tenure of an annual tribute. The rajahs, or kings, as you will find in the history of Indostan, are the unconquered Black Monarchs, who possess the Northern provinces, and furnish the Mogul emperor, or any other prince, with troops of their own complexion, called Rajapoots, from their royal descent; who fight like the Swiss

for pay, without any curiosity or principle respecting the cause of contest. But a droll practice of theirs is, that on beholding their leader slain, they instantly deem themselves absolved from every engagement, and, openly laying down their arms, run out of the field—and this without incurring the slightest impeachment of their courage.

The great military officers of the Mogul are called Omrahs, and if they have been generals, they are called Mirzas. But though the Pagan rajahs and nobility inherit the honours and estates of their ancestors, there are no such things as hereditary honours or estates amongst the Moors or Mahometans; but, on their decease, all their possessions, real and personal, are seized by the sovereign, as in Turkey. And, Arabella, you have heard much in England of jaghires, which I can inform you are neither more or less than these lands, which revert, on the death of a Mahometan chief, &c. to the emperor; by whom they are sometimes bestowed on those who occupy them, and sometimes are their personal acquisitions: some of which our countrymen have obtained as *douceurs* on certain great occasions; their merits on those occasions, however, are not always either obvious or satisfactory to the higher powers in England.

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Politics again!—but I am on the point of being furnished with a far more agreeable subject—for the theatre opens to-morrow, with Love in a Village—it opens, Arabella, when Doyley is absent—when your friend's heart is—and why should not your friend's heart be occupied by soft sentiments?—for, in a country where so large a number of its inhabitants dare to deny her a soul, sure she may amuse herself with feeling she has a heart. O how I at this moment wish myself in England!—I am fascinated, to write so much about such wicked unbelievers.

Adieu,

Your's, &c.

S. G.

LETTER

LETTER XXVII.

THE theatre, Arabella, is opened, and to-night will be honoured with my presence. The door-keepers are, I am told, Europeans; for the black people, in an office of that nature, would have no authority with the public.

The doors will be opened at eight o'clock; but the performance seldom terminates, I am told, till twelve or one in the morning.

Mrs. D——, Mrs. and Mr. Hartly, my father, the country-born lady I have so often mentioned, and Miss Hartly, (mentioned by me only in a melancholy mood, previous to my illness) accompany me; but alas! Arabella, I have not the requisites about me, I had promised myself, for participating this, my nevertheless favourite amusement; for what says the poet?

——Not of themselves the gay beauties can please,
We only can taste, when the heart is at ease.

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We go in palanquins, and shall make a fine illumination with our flambeaux; nor can you imagine a sight more extraordinary, than the contrast of the Gentoo complexion with their white dresses, or the advantage I am well aware it is to us Europeans, in general, to have them about us; for who does not know the alternate and striking effects of black and white? The artillery officers will also, I suppose, figure away in the boxes, and their uniform is elegant—blue, trimmed with silver—smart fellows, I can assure you; besides the recommendation of being men of taste and sensibility, as I could, if this was one of my vain moments, give you some undeniable proofs that they are.

Few things are more uncommon (or, let me tell you, more exemplary) than Mrs. D—— and my father's behaviour to each other; she having the good sense not to be *obtrusive*—he the good principle not to be a hypocrite:—they meet, without the folly of appointment, wherever they go—and are certain of speaking each other's sentiments in all conversations. I have observed my father pensive, without knowing the cause, until he has looked around and perceived Mrs. D—— absent; when he has mechanically (so natural has been the action to his feelings) enquired if she was
not

not expected—and twice, Arabella, on hearing she was confined at home with a cold—giving me a look of gentle reproach, he ordered his palanquin, to make her a visit. If I ask his opinion, he refers me to Mrs. D——; and on his applying to me for my choice in any instance, I always beg him to consult that lady. “Her eye,” I said to him this morning, “my dear Sir, is become my law—my oracle, her tongue.”—“Grateful winning girl,” he called me, “child of his tenderest affection;” and, pausing a moment, “in return for your open, your liberal-mindedness, you shall know all that has passed in your father’s heart.

“Mrs. Hartly has a thousand perfections; of one fault, my Sophia, you must therefore permit me to accuse her: she did not do justice to Mrs. D——, in her manner of communicating, either to me or you, the approbation with which that lady honoured me; in consequence of which, the first impression you received of Mrs. D—— was not a favourable one.

“But I was well acquainted with Mrs. D——’s noble disposition, and numberless accomplishments; and was therefore happy, since I could not offer her my hand, to soften my seeming neglect

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neglect of her, and ungentlemanly return for her singular kindness, by soliciting her friendship for my Sophia.

“ For, Sophia, at that period it was my fixed resolution to end my days in the East. I will not wound you by the mention of my motives; but my whole soul was in the desire of your establishment in England. Mrs. D ——’s fortune enabled her to live under whatever meridian she liked best; and, from my knowledge of the female mind, I was persuaded no event could be more likely to take place, on her meeting with a little disappointment in India, than that she should make England her place of residence; and to whose care could I have so satisfactorily intrusted my Sophia as Mrs. D ——’s, whose generous way of thinking has made her a parent to the son of her cruel husband ?

“ I told her my resolution respecting myself, with circumstances that melted her into tears you would have honoured, for your deceased parent was the object of them; and she assured me she would be all that dear departed one herself could wish to render her, in your service. Your attachment to her, your filial anxiety for me, have produced a most unforeseen alteration in the sentiments of
us

us all. I remain not at Bengal, when she and you determine to quit it; but, by Mrs. D——'s request, I mention no change of condition to her in India. We meet with pleasure, we part with friendship; and, in a word, our manner of considering each other here, is an implied prelude to our living together in England; and this is a victory over my feeling, the view, as I believed, of your approaching dissolution, could alone have effected:—but I am now convinced we both acted wrong. Your mother can never indeed be forgot by us, however wisely or piously we may bring ourselves to accept happiness at the hands of Providence, let it assume what shape it may.

Mrs. Hartly broke up our *tête-à-tête*, by telling us we should not be ready for dinner, if I did not make dispatch at my toilet.

I am, therefore, in great haste,

Your's, &c.

S. G.

LETTER

LETTER XXVIII.

MISS Hartly and Miss Rolle, the country-born lady I introduced to your knowledge, with her hooka before her, are only occasionally our visitants; for, in order to finish their education in a few particulars, they are, it seems, placed at a boarding-school, the only one in Calcutta, in much esteem with the Europeans.

The stipend, you may be assured, is considerable, but I have not yet qualified myself to announce it. There masters in every polite science attend, and there are public days for the friends of the children to see them dance, in like manner as in England; and at this school both the young ladies are to remain, until proposals may be received for their change of condition. Their fortunes are small (for Calcutta fortunes) twenty thousand rupees only; but I think there can be little doubt of Miss Hartly's marrying well, from her own great merit, and her brother's good connections.—Had young D. been a better figure, and his mind such as I could wish it, I would have
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tried my hand, for the first time, at match-making. I might have thought, you will perhaps say, of Doyly; but Doyly, I have already told you, is poor, and consequently such a union would ruin them both: besides, Arabella, why should you be so provoking, as to suggest him, when you know he is gone to England.

Morn: 4 o'clock.

I have been greatly entertained—the company, Arabella, was brilliant; and a birth-night could alone have eclipsed us.

The house is about the size of the Bath Theatre, and consists, as I was informed on my first arrival, of pit and boxes only: the first, an area in the center; the second, a range of commodious enclosed, or rather separated seats round it, from one corner of the stage to the other. No expence has, Arabella, been spared to gratify either the eye or the ear—a very pleasing band of music saluted the present Governor on his entrance—and the pit was crowded with spectators. It is lighted up upon the English plan, with lamps at the bottom of the stage, and girandoles at proper distances, with wax candles, covered with glass

glass shades, as in the verandas, to prevent their extinction; the windows being Venetian blinds, and the free circulation of air delightfully promoted by their situation.

The character of young Meadows was very agreeably supported by one of the Company's writers, a young gentleman that visits at Mr. Hartly's, and is in a rising way. Moreover, if I have any skill in physiognomy, he does not behold the sister of that house with unfavourable eyes, and I must mention as much to Mrs. Hartly. Hawthorn was performed by an adjutant in the artillery; Deborah Woodcock, by poor Doyly's patron, who has much pleasantry; Rosetta, by a young gentleman in the law department; Lucinda, by the son of an East India captain; and in like manner were the other characters filled up: and I do declare upon my word and honour, that I was as well entertained as if the female parts had been sustained by females—and again wish, in the cause of morality, the custom could be re-established in England. The scenery was beautiful, and the dresses superb. Here Golconda's wealth in all its genuine lustre astonished the beholder, and a profusion of ornamental pearls were disposed with good taste; in a word, whether it was the poet, or the performers

formers, or the diamonds, or the air of enchantment they all together certainly wore, I know not; but so pleasing an effect had the whole upon my mind, that I forgot Doyly, my native country, my Arabella, and my mother, and, for the only period of my residence at Bengal, was completely happy.

Several country-born ladies figured away in the boxes, and by candle-light had absolutely the advantage of the Europeans; for their dark complexions and sparkling eyes gave them the appearance of animation and health, the Europeans, had no pretensions to; and their persons are genteel, and their dress magnificent. Whereas, on the other hand (speaking for myself at least) paleness and languor told the country of my birth, and were not to be concealed or compensated by all that polite negligence, or accomplished manners, could do.

The pit was full of gentlemen of every denomination, which gentlemen paid their compliments, at convenient pauses, to the ladies; who, by the aids of perfumes and verandas, of fruit and of flattery, went through the fatigue of the evening with a good grace, and were conveyed home,

home, as they were conveyed there, in their palanquins, in very tolerable spirits.

As for myself, my attention was so engaged by the piece, that my heart several times asked, if it could be possible I was at the distance of 4,000 miles from the British metropolis?

Lionel and Clarissa is to be the next performance.

The gentlemen to whom we were indebted for our evening's entertainment, were soon at our supper-table; and the evening would have been concluded with a rational degree of cheerfulness, beyond all one can hope for in large companies, but for a little incident I shall mention:—Doyly's patron was so generous (having dispatched him, poor fellow, across the ocean on an embassy) to declare himself his rival. I was almost sorry the Gentoos had taken so much pains to fish him up on the Bugero disaster, and could alone consider him as the enemy of a youth, whose life he had most cruelly a second time endangered—for who knows not the precarious safety of him who rides upon the waves? This declaration was laughed off; but having swallowed his compliment of claret, he no less suddenly than forcibly seated himself between Mrs. D—— and me; and, calling

ing every power to witness that he would have one of us, boisterously kissed Mrs. D——'s cheek. I trembled for my father's feelings; nor was she, I believe, without her tender alarms. However, with a command of temper that astonished me, so present was she to the occasion, that she told him, on condition he gave up his chair to Mr. Hartly, she would be glad to hear how handsomely he could make love to her the next morning; and handsomely she was convinced, (by the abilities he had displayed in the character he had performed) he could acquit himself in every instance. This had the desired effect; and Mr. Hartly exchanging seats with him, universal harmony was restored. Mr. Hartly, however, whispered us, that he must give him a civil hint, such freedoms were not to be repeated in his house.

How I rejoiced in the circumstance, which, but a moment before, was no soothing recollection! for the winds and the waves, in their utmost wrath and violence, could alone rob Doyly of his existence; whereas, had he died in a quarrel, of which I was the cause, could I have attempted to survive him?—I would not be this bold man's wife, was he the Great Mogul himself.

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My opinion was then asked by the gentlemen, my genuine opinion (as being a competent judge, from my acquaintance with the London theatres) of the Calcutta candidates for fame on theatrical ground; and it was with pleasure I could, and did sincerely assure them, that I found good sense was sufficient to make a gentleman a player, though all the professional excellence on earth, without good-breeding and liberal connections, could not make a player a gentleman.

My father and Mrs. Hartly exchanged a look (for I did not perceive their lips move) that was perfectly intelligent to each other, and Mrs. D—— left us not, nor is she to leave us until to-morrow evening; so it is plain my father was not an unmoved spectator of the rough scene.—I shall dream, Arabella, of those horrible trees of destruction—and most heartily do I wish myself in England.

Yours,

S. G.

LETTER

LETTER XXIX.

HALF a word of Doily, and I have done.—Should he arrive safe, Arabella, and deliver into your hands the *chit* with which I have intrusted him, treat him kindly, for he has a truly valuable heart.

My father was in the breakfast-room before me—not so Mrs. D——; for she had slept little, she said, and complained of the head-ach.

My father's eyes met mine; he was greatly alarmed—"If we should lose you, Madam," said he, in a low voice, walking up to her, "how ardently shall I wish my Sophia had never known you!"

"I shall do very well," replied she, smiling, "I hope, notwithstanding the endeavours of all your friendly countenances to terrify me. Bear witness, Mr. Hartly, if I die, I pronounce myself

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self the victim of the dismal faces around me." We all made an awkward attempt to smile, in return to this lively sally; but Mrs. D—— protested it was a vile imitation, and begged us to desist. "However," said she, "though I am unwilling to prolong so melancholy a scene, (having beheld disease in various forms, and well knowing that the most severe attack must have its commencement) I think I should be unpardonable, not to set my house in some little order. Is there any one in this company so weak," cried she, "looking around her, as to suppose the idea of making a will a bad omen? if so, let them be turned out, for they are a disgrace to good sense, and an insult to piety." We were all silent. "Have you, Mr. Goldsborne, never made your will?"——"Yes, Madam," replied my father, "within these last three weeks of my life—and have presumed to appoint you, without either your knowledge or consent, my executrix, in one instance."

"I will be more polite than you then," said she, "and solicit permission to encumber you with the care of a young man, who, if he survives me, will not have a friend on earth to guide him aright—His temper is not without faults," continued she, "but I do hope his heart is in the

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right place; and your friendship will awe him into the adoption of your example.—Sophia, my gentle Sophia, take your pencil, and, before the lawyer arrives, commit what I shall tell you to paper.” I obeyed; but my hand shook in such a manner, I was fearful I could not form a letter. “To Sophia Goldsborne,” said she, “I bequeath my firmness of mind, that she may never more be found incapable of assisting a friend in need.—But I think I am better; and so, Miss Sophia, put up your pencil with your trembling hand, and let me be left alone with Mr. Hartly, who is the only person present that does not wear the features of my executioner; and yet I am confident he takes as kind an interest in my health and safety, as the best of you all.”

“Mrs. D—— can be insincere,” said I, “which is a sin of the heart; whereas the offence I committed against her, was the sin of my constitution.”

“I deny it,” said she—“your heart was equally guilty with mine; for virtues are vices, when productive of baneful consequences.”

My father arose, bowed, and was withdrawing. “Why, Mr. Goldsborne,” said Mrs. D——,

“if



"if I was not afraid of your opposing my last will and testament, I should not have the least objection to your being present, when the gentleman I have sent for arrives. Do you allow it is lawful for a woman to dispose of her property to her wishes? or would you recommend the delicacies and romantic fancies of her friends for her rule of conduct?—I have (but do let us all sit quietly down) a good deal of wealth. Young D—— shall receive from me as much as he can spend with a good grace—And now Mr. Goldsborne, I ask your advice, who shall I leave the remainder to? relations I never heard of (if such relations are upon the earth). To the patron of poor Doyly, in return for kindnesses received? Or do you allow it to be reasonable I should bestow it upon one I love, though that one should happen to be your own daughter? I will lay a thousand pounds you give judgment against my inclination."

"You do me injustice, Madam," replied my father;—"may you long live to enjoy your fortune! but, should my daughter be fated to survive you, I hope I can answer for her being grateful to your memory, for every mark of your affection you may be pleased to confer on her."

"You surprise me," said Mrs. D——, "you most agreeably surprise me."

"Then I have done more by you, Madam, than your utmost generosity to my daughter will do by me. However, since we have been led so far upon the subject of wills, I must beg you will do me the favour to read mine;" and, taking out his pocket-book, he broke the seals of a small packet, and put it into her hands.

"It is very concise," said she; but I hope there is some mention of Mrs. D——, that will prove to her, that her friendship for this company does not so far outstrip the friendship entertained for her as she may imagine."—Many were the changes of countenance she exhibited, whilst she perused it. "You have made me quite vain," said she, "Sir, by intrusting me with the contents of this paper; and I am not, then, in danger of becoming less worthy of your good opinion?" I felt my curiosity interested, but would not shew it; and my father returned it into the pocket-book from whence he had taken it.

The lawyer now arrived, and young D—— came soon after. The business was, however, soon over; and Mrs. D——, with great kindness

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ness, called to tell me she was not worse, and waited to introduce her son. I made all possible haste to dress, and hurried into her apartment; but fancying she looked very ill, all the vivacity, the lively assurance of her not being ill, had given birth to in my breast, forsook me, and I could only say, "Is this, Madam, the young gentleman?"

Mr. D—— (for, early days as it is with him, he assumes that title) made me a very decent bow; and, upon the whole, appeared much less disagreeable in his person, than on my first view of him; and I could perceive she was pleased that I paid him some attention. He did not, however, stay long with us; and she told me, as soon as we were alone, I should greatly oblige her, by saying what I really thought of a plan she had formed, in her own mind, for his establishment. "In the first place, observe, my Sophia, I mean to give him a good fortune, and, of course, enable him to chuse a woman less amply provided for, if her connections and character are recommendatory. Miss Hartly is an agreeable girl; and, I think, comes in every respect under my description. She is too happy, nevertheless, with all her merit, to be troubled with your nicety of temper; and will not disdain to hear a generous matrimonial

matrimonial proposal, from a young man, though his person may not be the most unexceptionable in the world. He is not ill-tempered, though a coxcomb; and she will only have to humour his foibles, to do what she pleases with him.—Is my scheme good or bad?"

"We do not," said I, "Madam, behold Miss Hartly with the same eyes. To me, she is elegant in her person, and lovely in her manners." And, Arabella, as from the abundance of the heart (you know the proverb) we are apt to speak, I was within a hair's breadth of telling her my scheme for Doyly; but checking myself, "Madam," said I, "is not the gentleman very young?"—"He is turned of twenty," said she. (I was amazed; for on the course I did not suppose it possible he could be more than sixteen at the utmost.) "Eighteen years of which," continued Mrs. D——, "I have had him under my care, if I may so express myself, when the fact is, that half the time, I scarcely ever beheld him, and he was not encouraged to bear me much respect. He is one of those that improve upon acquaintance; and though no genius, does not want for sense. His coxcombry is his only great fault; and time and a discreet wife, I think, will do much towards extinguishing that folly."

Every

Every body went to Lionel and Clarissa, except Mrs. D——, my father, and myself, who played a short pool at quadrille. It was not however, to be concealed, that though Mrs. D—— did her best to make us happy, she was indifposed, and I prevailed with her to retire early.

I will only take upon me to answer for myself; but certain it is, I passed the night in great anxiety, and self-condemnation. Had I not been the illiberal girl I have been, it is most probable we should have avoided the present threatening evil. Let no one hereafter, who would escape self-reproach—escape self-condemnation—fail to improve every possible opportunity of promoting the happiness of their friends; for, ultimately, that conduct will be to promote their own. What was it I feared? that my dear father, to love his wife, must cease to love his child? and thence, in the moment I was professing the warmest filial affection for him, prefer a situation for him that must, on any change of condition I might turn my thoughts to, leave him comfortless and companionless! Nay, how could I find the pleasure I did in Mr. Doyly's conversation, without remembering, how many melancholy hours the conversation

versation of such a woman as Mrs. D——, could preserve my father from experiencing?

I, to the disobedience of every injunction I had received, and the breach of every promise I had made, was in Mrs. D——'s chamber at seven o'clock, and had the grief to find her unable to sit up. She confessed to me, that Mr. Emson (Doyly's patron) had frightened her; and imputed her indisposition solely to that cause. "But this is a piece of information," said she, "we must not give your father. The quarrels of men are so alarming, that whoever wishes to prevent mischief, must be cautious how they breathe inflammatory complaints before the sex, lest some idle or fatal point of honour should make them conceive themselves bound to resent, or even to remonstrate with the offending party."

I went down to breakfast with the most cheerful look I could assume; and, as we were only a family set, this morning, by way of amusing my friends, I mentioned Mrs. D——'s wishes respecting Miss Hartly; and contrary to my expectations, found her perfectly right. Mr. Hartly said, "The offer was equal to whatever his sister had a right to expect; and that the kind intentions

tentions of such a mother as Mrs. D——, were full security for the felicity and provision of the woman she was so generous as to make the object of her choice, and honour with her friendship and protection." This had the desired effect, and filled up the breakfast hour; but, on my acknowledging that Mrs. D—— did not think of dining with them, a cloud of discontent hung on every brow. Mr. Hartly was so good as not to leave my father; and I, with a heavy heart, revisited Mrs. D——. In the evening, however, her physician assured us, she was not in the smallest danger; and so we were all convinced, and, therefore, very freely forgave him the *prudent* attention, it was evident, he meant to pay to his own interest; nor did he pronounce his visits unnecessary, until he had pocketed two hundred gold mohrs. Who then shall complain, that the sons of Esculapius, in England, understand a little manoeuvring; or, when occasion fairly presents itself, contrive to reimburse some of the great expence of time and fortune, which is inevitable, before they can obtain their diploma? I protest it would be for the good of society at large, in Britain, if some characters, I could mention, were to smart for one twelve months under the exactions, from which there is no defence in India, for the man or woman of wealth, except flying

the country; nor do I conceive, if Mrs. D—— would tell the truth, that the law and medicine, she has so recently stood in need of, has cost her less than five hundred pounds sterling, in so short a period as four days.

Mrs. D—— is gone home—and it is reported, that Mr. Emson sails next month for Europe—two circumstances that have had so agreeable an operation on our feelings, that we go to the play to-morrow evening (the Conscious Lovers); and I shall the next morning, resume my custom of telling you all I learn of this country and its inhabitants. For, so numerous are the people of England connected with the East, that I am well satisfied I shall enable you to figure away, to the delight of three-fifths of the company into which you will circulate, in consequence of my equally *entertaining* and *intelligent* correspondence. Nor is there any impropriety or indelicacy, Arabella, in saying a handsome thing of ourselves, when we are so situated, (which, at the present writing, is the case with me) that it must otherwise be *unknown*.

Congratulate us, I charge you, on our cause for rejoicing respecting Mrs. D——; and, if
Doyle

Doyly is with you, when this letter arrives, communicate the contents, and he will truly rejoice also; for he has the most sincere and abundant good-will for her of any one I am acquainted with, my father excepted.

I am your's, &c. &c.

S. G.

LETTER

LETTER XXX.

THE natives of Bengal have no dirty customs like the Europeans. For example, if a snuff-taker is mentioned, you know he, or she, is an European, insomuch that, partial as I am to my native country, I must wish that it would take a lesson from hence, and reprobate several propensities I could name, that are all together incompatible with the virtue of cleanliness. Your own observation will suggest the points of indecorum, not to say indecency, which I allude to.

I was startled, within this half hour, by the discharge of guns; for, though the affair of the Black Hole is but little remembered, at this distant period, at Calcutta, I myself am unable to forget it. Accordingly, with emotions I will not stop to describe, I sent to enquire the cause of the firing at the Fort, &c. &c.

The funeral of one of the Company's officers, was the answer I received; and the minute guns were continued for some time, with a solemn effect on my feelings; nor could I suppress a wish to
see

see the proceſſion—but that was negatived by all my friends; and yet, Arabella, to me, this kind prohibition heightened the concern I took in the affair. Death again! It is a ſubject that inſenſibly forces itſelf upon my notice, and tinges my moſt brilliant efforts at agreeable deſcription, with a gloom, I fear, you muſt find contagious.

The tide of the Ganges (for I will change my ſubject) for three ſucceſſive months flows one way; ſo that though ſhips can at all ſeaſons (as far as that article is accommodating) leave Calcutta, no ſhip, on any extremity whatever, for three months, can effect its navigation thereto; a circumſtance that accounts for what you may often hear mentioned, of Indiamen loſing their paſſage to this coaſt, and being obliged to defer it, until the ſacred river becomes propitious.

I own I was much diſappointed by my view of the banks of the Ganges, for I expected to have ſeen them ornamented with every beauty of the vegetable world, the ſpontaneous product of the ſoil; inſtead of which, its borders are unfavoured by nature, and uncultivated by art; and alone exhibit a ſameneſs of proſpect, wholly uninterſting to the beholder.

The

The immediate shores of Culpee and Cudjetee, where, as I have already mentioned, the Indians are stationed (though not so strictly as heretofore, for some of them come up as high as Diamond Point) are visited by both officers and sailors—who, having made a fire, sit fearless around it, in the very face of enemies that would chill my blood with horror—for tigers, I am assured, approach so near, as to be within a bound or two of the spot they occupy; though no instance has ever yet occurred, in which the fire has not proved their infallible security. Would one conceive it possible, Arabella, that any of the human species could sit with tranquillity amidst the howlings of formidable brutes, prompt to devour? All the sea forms are observed, on entering the mouth of the Ganges, of hoisting a pendant for pilots, and receiving the salutes of the ships previously arrived, in their passage to the Hughley, the name under which a branch of this celebrated river runs for above fifty miles, and on the most western part of which the New Fort is erected.

And now I mention the Fort, I recollect I have not yet told you that the public prison is within its walls; and few things, Arabella, are more curious or striking, than the machines which convey the prisoners from thence to the Court-House to
take

take their trials. The wheels of this machine are fourteen feet at least high, and under the axle-tree is suspended a wooden cage, sufficiently large to contain a couple of culprits, perforated with air holes to preserve them from suffocation; and in this miserable plight, guarded both before and behind by seapoys, they are exhibited to the eyes of the populace—the whole of which has to me a very distressing appearance. There is but one court for civil and criminal causes, though the judges are three in number; and an Armenian always attends, as interpreter between the Court and the plaintiff, or defendant, on all occasions. Moreover, the Company have a linguist entertained in their service, who is a Baronet, and receives a liberal gratuity for the exercise of his knowledge of those languages, so essential to their commercial interests. The Esplanade, like those several royal parks, St. James's, the Green, and Hyde Park, answers manifold purposes of convenience and pleasure to the Europeans.

For the Esplanade contains, besides the race-ground, many shady and delightful spots; the roads also to the Fort, to Watson's Works, &c. &c. lie through it; and it is often frequented by moon-light, by elegant walking parties, notwithstanding both the Company's and the Governor's gardens

gardens are always open for polite resort, and contain articles of vegetation of the first beauty and value, and every other mark of taste and happy cultivation.

You will naturally suppose, that statuary is a species of garden ornament the Governor and Company are not unmindful of; but to give you a list of the characters introduced, is a task I shall not undertake. I had, indeed, a scheme for immortalizing you and Doyly, could I have only brought you together on this spot; for, superadded to a Milton, who

Into the heaven of heavens, &c. &c.

your figure should have represented the Allegro, his the Penferoso, of that sublime poet. But I thank Mr. Emson's tyranny, and your want of affection for Sophia Goldsborne, that so happy a thought must remain unexecuted. I trifle, Arabella, with my pen, when my heart is dejected; but I beg you will consider that dejection as one of those many follies human nature is surpris'd into, when pleasure, by too long enjoyment, has lost the power to please; and that, like another Alexander, weeping for the discovery of unconquered worlds, we weep for want of some new amusement.

Landscapes,

Landscapes, ruins, and every rural, every interesting *et cetera*, are much admired at Calcutta, as garden decorations; and I visit a lady who is mistress of a spot, that is a close copy of Mrs. Southgate's beautiful lawns, parterres, and displays of agriculture, which meet the eye at her villa in the neighbourhood of Chertsey.

Did I ever yet tell you, that dreams and omens are much attended to by the natives of Calcutta—and that they have their lucky and unlucky days, which they observe with the same religious deference, as the most superstitious European of us all.

The well-bred and well-informed, affect to ridicule these attentions; but I can clearly perceive, that there are few minds uninfluenced by them—and, if you would do me strict justice, separate me not from the number—for when I dream of my father, or you in particular, I am either animated or depressed, according to the agreeable or terrific sensations with which I awake. Is this a proof of affection or weakness? I own to you, I wish to be flattered by you on the subject; and let me not be disappointed.

I have told you, the outside of the houses are white—but I find, bricks are made at Calcutta;
and

and therefore, unless washed by the composition called Chinam, I have been too hasty in my conclusions; for it was my idea, that the walls consisted merely of a clayey kind of substance, or of lath and plaster; so little defence is necessary against the climate.

When the hot winds are abroad, the angel of death, Arabella, is busy in all quarters; and, though numbers survive, the devastations are awful. Then is existence only supportable in the morning and evening; and the whole European people droop the head, and dissolution solely occupies their thoughts. I shall infect you, unless I hasten to tell you, I am,

Your's, &c.

S. G.

LETTER

LETTER XXXI.

MOORSHEBAD is the place at which the nabob of Bengal formerly kept his court, and which I, on that account, have a strange curiosity to visit. Our late Governor resided there, in the bosom of esteem and respect, even at the time when contests were deciding between the Company's servants and his *Mightiness* on the sword's point; and near this city is the Gentoo university I have already mentioned. I find myself very dull—but opiates are sometimes as salutary as cordials, and common life does not unremittingly supply us with great or astonishing incidents.

It is rather *mal-a-propos*—but no matter—I will, while it is fresh in my memory, tell you, that the natives wear arm-bracelets; and, as a proof of my remembrance of you, I have enabled myself, on my return, to present you with a pair of no contemptible value.

It

It is my intention (though perhaps it may surprise you) on my return to England, to visit all places of polite resort in such magnificent apparel, as may bespeak the splendor and the dignity of my Eastern connections, and obtain me first-rate consequence in my native country. For, unless I bear the marks of travelled knowledge about me, who will be inclined to give me the superiority I am so justly entitled to, over those who have never travelled at all?

The Conscious Lovers is a piece I read with displeasure (at least some scenes of it) and behold represented with disgust: Sir Richard Steele is in general both a chaste and a moral writer;—and how such a character could be capable of drawing a Cimberton, with all his *outré* licentiousness about him, is to me a problem beyond the power of the present age to resolve.

However, to spare the author, I will advert to the performers of this comedy. The Rosetta of Love in a Village, with elegance and propriety sustained the part of Indiana; and in Beville, a young gentleman recently arrived from China, did him-
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self great credit. Mrs. D—— was so pleased with him, that she invited him to her house, as did also the Hartlys; and my father honoured him with so much notice, that I began to fear he would outstrip poor Doyly in his approbation; but let him do his best, I will not be found an unfaithful friend to the absent. Should he chuse to admire me, he has my consent; but for a serious attachment he must excuse me.

You complain, Arabella, that instead of enabling you, in fancy, to trace out my voyage to India, step by step, and enter into my amusements and surprises—that the first of my letters is dated Bengal Bay, and all my succeeding ones are filled with anecdotes and descriptions of Calcutta. I assure you, it is not my fault that you are not better informed; for I wrote you every particular, I could suppose would amuse you, from Madras, and did believe it would be safely transmitted to you. However, since you so much desire it, I will endeavour to recollect the few observations I had an opportunity of making, and adventures I met with, before I reached this land of gallantry and politeness.

The first port we touched at on our passage, was the Madeiras, which I need not tell you, is an
African

African island, in the hands of the Portuguese. It consists, chiefly, of a wonderful rock, the surface of which is a continuation of vine-yards, fruitful beyond credibility; and though our stay was short, we made a visit to the Governor, whose house is situated on such an eminence, that we laboured hard to attain it: but, the eminence attained, our reception and entertainment well rewarded our trouble.

The principal town is Funchall: but so much has already been said of this place by other voyagers, that I will only mention a dexterous and critical manœuvre, performed by the Portuguese; for, by means of the surf, on your quitting the island, boats are shot to a distance from the shore, that is like enchantment; and though dangerous, is seldom known to be fatal, these people being so perfectly acquainted with the business. Here we took in some pipes of that wine, which receives its name from the island; and it is not improbable, on their return to England, (having twice doubled the Cape, and acquired the perfection believed derivable from that circumstance) but you may drink my health in some part of it, when circulated through your metropolis, by the wine-merchant to whom it is consigned.

From

From the starting of some of our water casks, we brought to in the harbour of St. Johanne, a small island, inhabited by black people only; who, from a species of whimsical pride, are ambitious of being employed, though in the meanest offices, by the English. Amused with the singularity of their humour, I suppose, some of the ship's crews, that have visited them, have made them understand the dignity and consequence of Dukes and Marquises, &c. &c. in the British empire; for, ludicrous as you may conceive it, our water casks were filled and rolled, to and from the shore, by a Lord Duke, and three Earls, of the first titles you are acquainted with; together with a whole illustrious progeny of sons and daughters around, soliciting equal honours in our service.

At St. Helena, I was much struck by the transparency of the water at the mouth of the harbour, to the depth of upwards of thirty fathoms, which flows over black rocks, that are as visible to the eye, as if barely beneath the surface.

At Bombay, the Company have a dock, and a most capacious harbour; to which place of safety the India ships make their periodical return; for,
 though

though the mountains Balagant (which run the length of the peninsula, within the Ganges) are so high as to check the western monsoons, yet is the Coromandel coast in no degree fitted to be the station of ships, beyond a certain time.

I was ashore at Madras—the Governor's boat being sent off for our conveyance, which is well built and manned. But the boats are, all of them, merely boards lashed together by a kind of thongs, made of some vegetable substances; the thongs passing through holes bored for that purpose, and stopped by chinam.

Their appearance is unwieldy; nor are they so well calculated to bear the sea, having flat bottoms, as those of a different construction; on which account, it is no unfrequent thing for them to be swamped, that is, filled by water, and sunk, with all on board, to the utmost depth of the harbour. They are manned by six Blacks, one of whom steers, and one watches the waves; for, to speak in the nautical language, what they have successively to encounter, are, the surfs, and a lull; and, during the last calm moment, they pull with all their might, and then prepare themselves

to

to combat the violence of the former. The passengers, however, when acquainted with the laws of the place, take a soufing with great composure; for, should one single European be lost by a swamp, all the poor Blacks belonging to the boat are put to death; they are, therefore, certain of being fished up with safety and dexterity, with no worse consequence than spoiling their cloaths, and, of course, preventing their figuring away on the island.

The Governor's house is a handsome building, and his entertainment of strangers liberal. The island consists of two towns, called, from the complexion of their inhabitants, the White and Black Towns. The name of Fort St. George is so seldom used, that it is almost forgot—it is under the civil, and every other regulation of Calcutta. Of the Cape I shall not speak—though I was regaled with some of the wine so called, whilst we lay off Table Bay—so much has been written, by persons of taste and information, respecting the beauty of the country. We were treated with an illumination, very surprising in its appearance, from fire insects, which overspread the surface of the water; and, though prepared for it by report, I did not marvel the less on beholding it. The Line, I

M

need

need not tell you, is twice crossed in an East India voyage, and many phenomena are encountered; such as its raining on each side of the ship, without one drop falling upon deck; of which I, your friend, was a spectator, with alternate squalls and calms, that startle a fresh-water sailor; and this is all I can remember, uninstructed in a multitude of authors, who have either been eye-witnesses of what they relate, or received their accounts from good authority. The tempests off the Cape, are, in general, frightful; but so prosperous were our gales, that Neptune's domain has no terrors for my recollection, experienced in my own person—though I tremble at every breeze, on account of those to which my perhaps less fortunate friends may be exposed.

Mrs. Hartly has sent to inform me, by Miss Rolle, that a resolution has just now been carried, *nem. con.* by the company, assembled in the saloon, with my father's highest approbation, to deprive me of the use of pen, ink, and paper, during my future residence at Bengal. Which will they punish most, Arabella, you or me? I leave you to decide, (as you best know how far my literary labours are pleasing, and imagine yourself competent to declare the degree of pleasure I receive therefrom)

therefrom) whilst I attend this tribunal; where I am certain of creating more friends by a gracious smile or two, than I shall find malecontents from any article of conduct in your

S. G.

M 2

LETTER

LETTER XXXII.

IT is a common observation, Arabella, with moral writers, and the fact is literally true at Calcutta—that life is a chequered scene. The last ships that take their departure this season, are gone, and my levees are sensibly affected by the returns to Europe. But I am told the rule at Calcutta is, to balance the regrets of absence by the pleasures of re-union.

“Do but conceive,” says Mrs. Hartly, “what delight it will give you to renew these intermitted connections—to hear all the news from England—to receive fresh supplies of fashion—and, perhaps,” added she, with an agreeable look of meaning, “see Edmund Doyly again.”

I felt myself blush, to a painful degree, as we were not alone; for, if we had, I should not have attempted concealments, that would have been an insult on her penetration. She, however, kindly relieved me, by instantly changing the subject,
and

and appearing unconscious of her triumph over my former reserves; yet would it be much the wisest part in me, to appoint a successor in my partiality—for my mind, Arabella, tells me, I shall see Doyly no more.

Young D—— improves every hour, and mixes in all our parties; which is a proof of one of Chesterfield's tenets, however apocryphal I hold them in general; for, that we rise or sink with our company, is undeniable. Example—precept—a sense of shame—and a desire to please, are great, I had almost said infallible, polishers of the manners; and we become very decent copies of first rate originals, unless incorrigible beings indeed, and incapable of feeling, and of distinguishing.

I am plunged into the utmost concern; my amiable Bramin, Arabella, died last night; and died, I am assured, blessing me. It seems he took a fever, a few days ago, but my friends were so kind, they kept it from my knowledge; and, on my father's Sekar presenting himself this afternoon, with a woe-begone aspect, Mr. Hartly drew him aside, as if on particular business, and received from

from him the account I have set before you. Gentle and benevolent spirit! if it is permitted for mortal beings to exercise thy care, and to be constituted objects of thy kindness, deign to bestow a thought on me!—O! he was all that heaven has ever condescended to make human nature—and I will raise a pagoda to his memory in my heart, that shall endure till that heart beats no more.

How will they dispose of his worthy remains? No funeral pile will, I hope, consume them to ashes—Yet wherefore that wish? for then will they be secure from every possibility of insult, or danger of mingling with dust less pure than their own.

I have, by my father, begged the Sekar to procure, if that indulgence is not incompatible with the Gentoo customs, a lock of his hair, for the purpose, my dear girl, of making it a mental talisman, like the poor monk's box and Yorick, against all the irregularities to which we Christians are subject. You want such a shield the least of any person I do or ever did know; yet, Arabella, you shall have a locket set with pearl, with some device suitable to the occasion, and wear it near your heart, for its virtues will be abundant:

My

My sensibility was, however, too much interested by this unexpected event, for raillery to be seasonable, or good advice well timed; I therefore retired to my chamber, not, I fear, to sleep, but to reflect upon the transient gift of existence. Doyly will feel for me, if you mention this news to him, for much did he honour and prize my Bramin,* and court his favour. Doyly may, nevertheless, even whilst I am writing his name, have reached the confines of eternity, and found the ocean as merciless, as the cruel disease to which our favourite has fallen a victim. Peace, unending peace, be with his shade! and, take notice, that should time and chance restore me to my country, I will erect a pagoda in Britain, to perpetuate the remembrance to *my*, or, what will be exactly the same thing, *your* posterity, that so exemplary a character was on the list of my Bengal acquaintance; and that I doubt not but I shall meet him, where parting is an evil no longer to be apprehended; and sin and sorrow have no place. I would not, Arabella, believe, at this moment, that any attachment he felt for me, was the cause of the slightest pain to him, for the world—and henceforth be all my vanity subdued. Tyrants of every kind, are the terror and disgrace of their species; but the victories of vanity, like those of the grand enemy of mankind, are marked by devastation,

vastation, and enjoyed without other delight, than the delight of a malign and baneful soul. I will, however, try to be chearful.

Did I ever tell you, that the Calcutta ladies are passionately fond of jessamine and roses? but such is the fact; and moreover, if my recollection deceives me not, I called their bowers, *recesses*, for fear you should not understand so obsolete a term, at this refined period, in England. It was an absurdity of my own creation—for the celebrated bower of the celebrated Rosamond, at Woodstock, will give you some proper idea of the Eastern taste, in this respect; some of them being wholly impervious to the sun-beam, and a most relieving situation, you may suppose, in such a climate as Bengal—at the same time that they are diffusing the most grateful odours around, and feasting the eye with an intermixture of the loveliest productions of nature; and these bowers also, it is a settled point in my breast, will be introduced by me, at my British villa; not as an improvement, but a revolution in the ornamentals of gardens—and a proof, that when good sense bade adieu to my fair countrywomen, she fled on the wings of the winds to the Eastern shore; and, should you, or your friends, be inclined to engage in her pursuit, you

you will find her, much at her ease, at Hartly Bungilo.

These are flights of fancy, I grant you—mere creatures of the air I breathe; but let me once find myself set down safely on the banks of the Thames, and I will endeavour to convert them into realities; of which you would, I trust, become a glad spectator.

We are all of us oddly situated. 'Mrs. D—— is tired of India—but Mrs. D—— cannot declare as much, without implying that she is desirous of being a bride, the determined consequence of her arrival there.—I sigh for my Arabella's company, and would advance the secret wish of Mrs. D——'s heart; but that it is very probable poor Doyly and I should then meet on the high seas, and have the power only of exchanging a passing look. My father has affairs to settle, he cannot so suddenly bring to bear as he imagined—and is so fettered and so entangled by his own sublime ideas, and the sublimity of his bride elect's sentiments, that he knows not which way to turn himself. Moreover, should fate and fortune send Doyly back—have I not a vow, like a wall of brass, thrown up between us? I will only say thus much

on the occasion—that sentiment leads us frail and narrow-sighted beings into more follies and perplexities, than any other rule of conduct whatever. We must not, for example, make ourselves happy, if not altogether consistent with sentiment; we must not be sincere to those we love, unless that sincerity can be reconciled to sentiment; nor, on detecting ourselves guilty of an egregious absurdity, dare to renounce it, unless duly authorised by sentiment: so that sentiment, which is a thing amiable in itself, is rendered the most pernicious of all things in its effects; and we live and die in the act of sacrificing all that is truly valuable or amiable in life, to a chimera of our own brain; which we, like lunatics, dress up in the likeness of sentiment. We laugh at the Gentoos, and their plurality of gods—but truly ridiculous our wisdom must appear, which, instead of being exerted in the cause of happiness, its whole end and aim is to teach us to be miserable with a good grace, and undo the benevolent work of Providence with our own prophane hands: for, to be happy, not miserable, were we, most undoubtedly, created.

I will change my subject a second time—for I can make nothing to my satisfaction, or my reputation, of the one I am now engaged in.

I am

I am called by the natives, Belate Be Bee—the English Lady; for, however low rated in England, I am a sovereign princess here; and, was I so inclined, could wring the hearts of my dependents. But, in like manner with yourself, Arabella, I love to see the human countenance dressed in smiles of content, of gratitude, of innocent pleasure. It is a reproach of the severest kind, to a feeling temper, to have interrupted the felicity of others.

Belate Sab, is an Englishman; Chookalo Calalo, is a lighted candle: but I am forming a vocabulary, with which I mean to present you, that I may at least find one in England able to understand the words I have taken so much pains to acquire.

Beville, (for so he is universally called, in honour of his excellent performance of that character) visits much at Hartly House; and those who profess the art of analysing, place those visits to my account. If my conversation was half as agreeable to him as his is to me, there might be danger at Calcutta; but he has many connections that can supply my place to him, though his well-stored mind has no counter-part under this meridian. I therefore measure time by the long minutes till his return.

My

My father observes me more than usual, as if he would read my most secret thoughts—I shrink not from his penetrating eye; I know he is too generous to constrain me, and too well read in his daughter's thoughts, to mistake her wishes in any instance beyond the present moment.

I am courting Beville for *you*; and he has already taught himself to dwell upon your praises. Is the picture you draw of your friend, Madam, a real or a flattered likeness? Why do oceans roll between us? Your letters of recommendation, what a high point of favour would they not procure for me! I would make an immediate voyage to England, if I was possessed of such credentials, and to such a lady. Where it will end, I do not take upon me to say; but the marks are at present strong about him, that whenever within the reach of you, he will make you a visit. Young D——, I perceive it, likes him not. I honour him for it, because it is not natural for us to love those who eclipse us; and at dissembling, in this respect, he is a novice. When my Bramin was alive, I had a strange wild desire to outshine all my female acquaintance; the desire was unworthy of me, and as such has been reprobated by me. I set my understanding no longer out to shew—I spend no idle hours at my toilet; and am an uninterested participater

participater of all the gay scenes which I behold others enjoying with rapture. You will be, perhaps, for placing this change in my taste, temper, and conduct, to a wrong cause; but I protest to you, Doyle's absence or presence is no part of the question, at this precise period, in the deranged breast of,

Your

S. G.

LETTER

LETTER XXXIII.

THE Sekars, or Brokers, to whom the sale of all kinds of merchandize is intrusted, have an Ana, I understand, in every Rupee; keep three writers each; and are, many of them, masters of much wealth: but there is no doing without them, and they generally preserve a fair reputation. My father is, however, so well satisfied with his Sekar, that he intends making him a handsome present on his leaving India.

I was last night at the tragedy of Zara, and shed abundance of tears. The poet has indeed created a distressing conflict for a youthful heart, that has a powerful effect on the feelings; and I think, Arabella, the constitution of my mind is such, that I should have fell a victim to the parental injunction. What abundant reason have I not, therefore, to be thankful for my happy condition! for I am not more anxious for my freedom of choice in the article that must determine the colour of my future life (I mean the choice either of a single or a married situation) than my father is
anxious

anxious in all things for my felicity ; and I am as little desirous of bestowing myself contrary to my father's approbation, as I should be reluctant to do violence to my own inclination ; which I indeed consider as the natural rights of existence.—I have sat for my picture, to oblige Mrs. Hartly, but have enjoined her to let it remain in Calcutta, and not suffer her friendship to lead her into the error of believing, because I may hold a tolerable first-rate place in her heart, that she is entitled to introduce my resemblance into her closet at Hartly Bungilo, where I should disgrace her collection.

It requires no small talents, Arabella, to prevent our heads being the dupe of our hearts. We esteem an object, and we will, for argument's sake, allow the object to be estimable ; but, the character is a private one, and its beauties and its virtues have neither influence or operation beyond the small circle of friendship ; and consequently, though to us very striking and great, would become ridiculous by being brought forward to universal admiration, like a taper in the sun-beam. And, I pray you, who am I, Sophia Goldsborne, that I should be found amongst the most accomplished of my sex—who want not the aid of a foil to palliate the folly of my obtaining a niche ?—I should die with confusion at such a violation of common sense and common decorum.

I have

I have made an acquaintance with a Mrs. Savage, the gentlewoman who keeps a boarding-school at Calcutta, and find her very well qualified for so arduous an undertaking; for her morals are good, and her understanding cultivated. She sighs, however, she confesses, like myself, for her native country; and will, I doubt not, as soon as she is able, return to England. The loss Calcutta must sustain on such an event taking place, has made me cast about for a successor: and I hoped Mrs. Rider might have been prevailed upon; but she modestly declines, saying, there is a great difference between the education of children under the parental roof, and in a situation that renders you answerable at all points for their safety and welfare; an undertaking no abilities are equal to; for, in such a situation, you must depend upon others, who may either abuse or betray their trust, and defeat the best-formed, and the honest-executed plan, as far as respects the superior on earth.

There are, however, in England, my good girl, many accomplished and slenderly provided for women, with more courage than Mrs. Rider possesses, that might be induced, by the knowledge of the great advantages derivable from the exercise of their talents at Calcutta, to make the voyage. Will you put the knowledge, therefore, into circulation?

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culatation? for no one article of female provision or accommodation can be of half the importance as the happy direction of the mind and manners, at the period when impressions are most lively and indelible. For I would challenge my whole sex, by an appeal to their own experience, to disprove this assertion, so well understood by Pope, and so worn in the public eye by quotation—

For as the twig is bent, the tree's inclined.

And so much has the worthy and amiable Mrs. D—— her good wishes in this cause, that she has offered to be a subscriber to any established fund, for making it an object with an accomplished Englishwoman to spend one seven years of her life at Calcutta, and to ensure a valuable candidate for the vacancies as they may occur.

My father has purchased a spot for a Bungilo. I was low spirited at the information, it seemed so strongly to imply our prolonged residence in India. Mrs. D—— has had the goodness, however, to let me into a secret; for my father intends it as a compliment to Miss Hartly on her becoming Mrs. D——, with the permission, nevertheless, of him and his friends to visit it, whilst he is within the reach of such visitation.

How

How variable is human opinion!—this intelligence constituted that very act a pleasure, which, while its motives were unascertained, excited much pain—and here am I, entering, with my whole powers, into its decoration and embellishment.—Adieu, my Arabella! I do not at this moment despair of our re-union.

S. G.

LETTER

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LETTER XXXIV*

I HAVE exposed myself, Arabella, and every tongue in Calcutta is now employed in telling it. My father presented himself somewhat hastily, I thought, because unexpectedly, just as we were this day seated at dinner; and standing behind my chair, without the least preparation, said, "Poor Doyle is"—and on some account, I did not observe what, stopped.

"Is what?" cried I, with an emotion that surprised all the company—"O what, Sir, is poor Mr. Doyle?"—"Only," replied my dear father, pressing my hand, "only arrived, within this ten minutes, safe at Calcutta."

What a mortifying discovery has the interest I took in his safety occasioned!—Mrs. Hartly endeavours to sooth me into self-reconcilement, but, I think, it can never more take place. Infatuated girl!—but first impulses, I find, are not to be guarded

* The date of which is six months after the preceding one.

guarded against; and the secret of my heart, which I have so long treasured up, has escaped me, irrecoverably escaped me!—"Where is the good gentleman," said Mrs. Hartly, with a provoking turn of countenance, "shall we not be favoured with his company?"—"He is following me," replied my father, "with dispatches for Sophia, from her old friend and school-fellow; the honour of presenting which he refused making a transfer of, or I should have had the delivering of them."

Doyle now entered, and with his usual grace bowed to the company; who with one voice congratulated him on his return, except the foolish weak creature I need not name. His dress improved his appearance—I never saw any body—abstracted from all superabundant partiality—look so well in deep mourning. An uncle, who stood between him and the possession of a fine estate, and who, with an unkindness that forbids all regret for his decease, had compelled him to quit his native country a mere adventurer, did not live to reproach him, on his return to England, with the madness (as he called it) of his East-India voyage, though solely resulting from the narrowness of his finances, and the consequential unfavourableness of his prospects in life. And (could

you

you have supposed such a thing, Arabella?) the young man's head, on this change of fortune, became instantly giddy, inasmuch that, having got rid of his commission the first possible moment, he forgot every earthly creature, and every earthly spot, except Calcutta, and some few friends there that shall be nameless, and accordingly embarked, with a heart I had marked down for some other female's prize, in the first packet, in order to lay that no less faithful than affectionate heart at my feet; and, delivering me back my own packet, made every imaginable apology for his sin of omission, &c. &c. on the occasion.

And this wild act my father considers as a token of violent regard, forbidding me, by his looks and example, to shew any displeasure. An exclamation, however, escaped me, that sufficiently spoke my feelings:—"Not seen my Arabella!—not given her the satisfaction of knowing I am alive! or enabled yourself to tell me a thousand pleasing particulars where her welfare is concerned!—O Mr. Doyly, is it possible?"—"Yes," replied my father, in an accent that mortified me not a little, "it is, my dear Sophia, possible, that poor Mr. Doyly is safe arrived at Calcutta."

Wonderful

Wonderful all this!—nor do I foresee when my wonder will cease.—Now am I convinced of the power of my charms, and shall want no farther support in my own good opinion for ever.

Mrs. D——'s reception of Doyly was like herself, engaging beyond what I can describe. “Our parties,” said she, “have been incomplete without you, and my *petits soupers* devoid of animation. Remember, we never lose you again at Calcutta; nor will I open my doors, unless you are to be one of the company.”

Young D—— stared, and I enjoyed the alarms this address visibly gave rise to in his breast; for at Calcutta, as I have repeatedly told you, the idea of matrimony is inseparable from the knowledge of an acquaintance between the sexes—and he seemed to anticipate his downfall, should his mother-in-law take a husband to herself, not much more than his own age.

Mrs. D—— saw the effect her good-humour and friendship for Doyly had produced in the selfish mind of her son; and, to the entertainment of all present (for all present were soon aware of her motive) coquetted with the young man, until the hour for retirement arrived; but then thought proper

proper to undeceive him, lest any mischief between them should ensue;—for Mr. D—— wears a sword—and who will not grant, that a rival in interest, is as severe a provocation, with some tempers, as a rival in love?—A pretty winding up, indeed, it would have proved of Mr. Doyly's romantic voyage, to have had his throat cut, from an innocent frolic, in the hour of self-congratulation and imagined security!—but that, Arabella, is frequently found the hour of our worst danger—and, of course, it is our duty to be evermore on our guard.

But let me do Doyly justice, before I go to sleep. He did, I find, enquire for you, agreeably to the superscription of my letters, but you was gone into the country. He waited your return, while patience, in his situation, was a virtue—and did *intend*, but forgot to fulfil his intention, to leave them in the care of your servant, with a note of lamentation for the disappointment he had met with, in not meeting with your fair self;—and so the whole matter is rather more decently accounted for than in the first instant;—for, let me bear witness, when the heart is occupied by such fluctuating subjects as the winds and the waves, it is not extraordinary the memory should be absorbed, and the conduct vague and inconsistent. His re-
turn

turn would have given me tenfold pleasure, if he had brought me news of my Arabella ;—but, from this state of the case, I think he must be forgiven—What say you ?—Aye or No !

Adieu !

O talk not to me of the wealth she possesses—

it seems, was the language of Doyly, on my father's attempting to make a long speech relative to what he intended to give me :—and thus you find me on the edge of the matrimonial precipice ;—for, though tender distress, and delicate embarrassment, are very pretty decorations for *painted* scenes—the realities of life need receive no such colourings from the pencil—for the sensible head, and the sympathising heart, feels them all ;—I shall, therefore, say not one word how I looked, or how I replied, when solicited by the man of my choice, on the one hand, to accept him, and commanded by my father, on the other hand, to follow my own inclinations. Generous, indulgent command !—for well was he acquainted with the bent of my inclinations, before such command was issued—the Padra, therefore, stands a good chance of obtaining some twenty gold mohrs, at least, on my account—but I will have the whole affair as private as possible, let my friends remonstrate as they may.

Lord

Lord Cornwallis is on his way to Calcutta, to assume the reins of government. That he is a man of fashion, we hear without emotion ;—but that we hear he is a man of abilities and honour, we rejoice. He will be received with every mark of distinction, in honour of his and our Sovereign ; but his hour of departure, alone, will evince the advance he has made in our approbation and attachment.—I stand impartial, and will give his claims due weight :—but, if it should be required of me to forget the Governor I have known, and sink his fame in the celebrity of any new comer, I shall beg to be excused. Hereditary advantages, however brilliant their effects, are but secondary recommendations ;—the self-ennobled individual, and him who disgraces not the memory of his illustrious forefathers, being the only highly revered characters in this land of commerce and plain understanding.

I am, &c. &c.

Your's,

S. G.

N

LETTER

LETTER XXXV.

AMAZEMENT!—so this same little winning Mr. Doyly, is the godson of my beloved mother, and your near relation.—A pretty plot this!—and may I lose my pretensions to the privileges of a Christian female, if I pardon your share in it—or, what is tantamount, be compelled to embrace the narrow and illiberal faith of the sons of Omar; which by the way, I have now some thoughts of doing—for I shall, at least, be of consequence whilst living, if annihilation (in the opinion of my adorers) must be my portion when dead;—and that is more than my professed friends, though of the race of Believers, have chose to give me, in this instance.—The following is the confession the offending parties in the East have been brought to make; nor shall I fail to add your's thereto, the first opportunity by which it can be obtained.

My father, perceiving me disinclined to marry in the East, for wealth, &c. with men old enough to make me guilty, in so doing, of a breach of the

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the canonical articles, which positively forbid your marrying your grandfather ;—and anxious to unbend *tête-à-tête* with a son-in-law likely to make his daughter happy—writes off to England for Doyly, telling him, if his prospects were not improved, he believed he could promise to be serviceable to him in India. Doyly embarks, and, being arrived, receives the offer, point-blank, of his friend's daughter, with all her emoluments and endowments, provided her consent could be obtained ; in which attempt he was to have all lawful aid and assistance.

Doyly (as who would not) snaps at the offer. A young damsel of my claims and appearance might, Arabella, have been carried with success, to a much higher market ;—but every man in his humour, say I—and, being my father's property, he had a right to indulge his fancy, as far it was reconcilable to my wishes.

Doyly began his manœuvrings, I suppose nothing doubting ; for where is there a young man in this age to be found, that thinks humbly of himself—person or mind ?—when lo ! what should come to pass, but his imbibing so exalted an idea of the height and depth of my deservings, that he falls into the state of boobyism, which caused

all my suspense, folly, &c. &c.—for, though his respect for my mental merits was abundant, from repeated conversations with you, our common friend, thereon—yet, not having seen me, within my remembrance, my personal graces (which were to be superadded to the account) were so dazzling and so dismaying, that he very childishly gives away his heart, without seeking a return in kind;—and no less childishly resolves never to disclose his tender absurdity, until some change, or chance, had lifted him a few degrees nearer an equality with me in pecuniary matters;—a resolution that locked up his lips, not only in all the intercourse he enjoyed with me (and encouragement to speak out, I fear, was legible in my countenance, had translating looks been his talent) but, in the moment also of bidding adieu, when presumption is so excusable, because so natural in a lover—who knows not what he does or says, until his offended Dulcinea recalls him, by her anger, to a sense of his crime, and he begs pardon, and offends—and offends, and begs pardon, to the last point of the last interview between them.

But, to shew you the metamorphosis riches can produce—this timid, humble Doily, is become the most ardent and precipitate of lovers—and
would

would have seized my hand, *volens volens*, the first evening of his arrival at Calcutta; in consequence, however, I should add, of the universal opinion (with my father at the head of that opinion) that I entertained a secret *tendre* for him.—Secret, do I call it?—that ever falsehood and deceit should look so well upon paper!—but, bound by the laws of decorum to preserve such secrets inviolate, that should, Arabella, by the courtesy of our friends, be deemed a secret, which has not been confessedly revealed, whatever presumptive evidence is producible of the contrary.

And yet, there is something premature in the business;—for who knows what friends Lord Cornwallis may bring over with him—to make one repent one's yieldingness of temper?—I have, however, placed the emblems of tranquil feelings before me (the devices I mentioned to you, wrought with the hair of my departed Bramin) in order to extinguish the embers of vanity, now re-kindling in my heart:—yet what have I to ask of quiet-mindedness, more than I possess?—for, Arabella, I am content to leave Calcutta, without occasioning one scene of blood and slaughter in my name, under the spreading branches of the trees of destruction (which might have been so reasonably expected from my charms) in contest
for

for the honour of my hand; and am preparing myself (with my own consent) to domesticate in Britain, to the very confines of oblivion—which is carrying the virtue of humility to a most unprecedented height, in a damsel of my complexion and turn of sentiment.

The same round of amusements is about to take place, as at this time last year.—The Gentoo holidays begin first—the races succeed—and the theatre will open some weeks sooner than at that period;—all things being thus early in a proper train, out of compliment, I suppose, to the expected Governor—so that we shall not want amusement;—and I have it in contemplation to point out a few dramatic characters to Doyly, which, I persuade myself, he would fill in a manner far from disgraceful to either me or himself. Calcutta once more looks like itself;—men, Arabella, in other words, abound;—and I am beheld, by all my old acquaintance, as if I had horns on my head, because I have not renounced my maiden state;—but the mystery will soon be unravelled, and they will find, that though wealth could not tempt me, modest merit, noble-mindedness, and a long list of matrimonial requisites, could prevail, even over a vow—a vow you can produce against me, to the impeachment
of

of my morals, and the discolouring of my lily-white fame ;—for, amongst my other articles of celebrity, my sincerity of heart, and the sincerity of my lips (or, as you would call it, veracity) have a distinguished place.—I thank you for your kind remembrance of me, and shall conceive every cause lost, in which you may chuse to accept a brief—so prevailing are the reasons you have set before me, in excuse for Doyly's conduct—not to mention a word of the force of example—for you, Arabella, forgive him neglects, I could not hope you to pardon.

I am your's, &c.

S. G.

LETTER

LETTER XXXVI.

LORD Cornwallis is hourly expected, and bugeros are in readiness to fall down the Hughley, on its being announced he has made the mouth of the Ganges.

Mrs. D——, with an ardour I did not think her capable of, has fitted herself and friends out at all points, to do this great man honour—at least, by adding one more bugero to his train; and my father says, our company cannot be dispensed with.

What can I say?—my spirits are in unison with the occasion;—

My shepherd is kind and my heart is at ease.

But I shall not be without my apprehensions;—for, did I not see the time, when Doyly's life was in imminent danger, though on a party of pleasure:—but Doyly promises to be discreet, and Mr. Emson has taken himself to England;—I will, therefore, speak peace to my fears, and gratify

gratify Mrs. D——'s desire of exhibiting me.— But of Mrs. D—— I have somewhat to mention, not quite so much in the style of friendship as I had expected; she can have her concealments, as well as a certain young Lady, when she pleases—for (could you have thought it) my father's will, which he put into her hands to peruse, when she was about to make her own, contained his approbation of Doyly for a son-in-law—his act of sending for him from England, for the purpose of gaining my favour—and a solemn request, that she would finish what he had begun, provided it was discovered to be my inclination.—A pretty business, truly!—and thus, it is probable, she will be often employed by him, in secret services respecting his child, that will be preconcerted between them.—I would be angry, if I could resist being pleased—but, next to yourself, Arabella, she is the wisest and the best creature on earth.—Mrs. Hartly is not forgot by me—nor her sweet disposition unremembered. She has, however, a family to share her attentions and kindnesses; whereas Mrs. D—— is ours entirely, and without alloy.

One of our visiting friends has taken a French leave of us. I believe I have told you, that one side of the river Hughley is privileged ground,

the opposite shore to Calcutta, to which place this young spark is fled. He spent his evening, I find, in the tavern, at the gaming-table, where, having lost considerable sums, he was pushed on from one act of desperation to another, until, not being worth a shilling, he was compelled to become a fugitive among fugitives (for no one of good prospects or good connections resides there) the fatal and frequent consequence of this dreadful infatuation. Card-playing was designed for amusement only, to unbend the mind from too intense reflection. It has, however, been perverted into an engine of destruction—a calamity without a mitigation—for what resources has a wretch in his hour of self-created affliction, when the whole world, and his own heart, are united in his condemnation? The gamester, moreover, seldom falls alone; an amiable wife, a lovely offspring, are too often involved in the crushing misfortune; and such is the nature of his profession, that even success ought to wound his feelings, for he must, Arabella, undo, if he is not undone.

I am, nevertheless, so much interested in the fate of this young sinner, that I have besought Doyly to serve him if he can—for he is the victim of premature, of unbounded prosperity;—had he
been

been less, he would have been much more fortunate. We shall therefore make a point of procuring him some moderate re-establishment, which, we trust, he will be smarted into a knowledge of the value of, and game no more.

Lord C—— is arrived, and professed himself much pleased with his reception.

Every creature is flying to his house to pay their *baïse-mains*; and it is said, that as soon as the bustle is over, the Nabob will make him a public visit. There will be a fight, Arabella, for an European gentlewoman!—How lucky it is, my hour for embarking did not arrive previous to this grand raree-show!

Our voyage was a pleasant and delightful one—for when the surface is smooth, I am fond of water excursions—and, by what you London people experience in your parties to and from Vauxhall, &c. &c. you may judge how musical accompaniments must increase the pleasure of the Eastern voyaging.

Young

Young D—— has a good voice, and, what I should never have suspected him of, sings with much taste. We had an awning of kittesaws, and did our best to be noticed when the Bugero of bugeros passed us; but, mortifying so ever as the confession may be, it shall be confessed that I verily believe we were confounded with the multitude.

My father has furnished himself with large assortments of Eastern manufactures, by much the largest part of which is intended for a present to my friend, so that you stand a chance of eclipsing all the Misses of your acquaintance—a most sentimental gratification: but as for my part, *simplex munditiis* shall be my motto, which requires as much skill to hit off, without being under or over dressed in a single article, as any female etiquette I know. Moreover, so altered am I in my views and wishes, that I have settled with myself to affect the Gentoo air, which is an assemblage of all the soft and winning graces priests or poets have yet devised a name for, and Doyly shall figure away as my Bramin; and so well have I instructed him in every humane tenet of that humane religion, that he will not hurt a butterfly, nor can he dispatch even a troublesome musketto without a correspondent pang—and habit, you know, is
said

said to give us a kind of second nature;—but it is to do Mr. Doyly barely justice to say, that no savage climate, not even the climate of his, mine, or your ancestors, has power to render him aught but the friend of all created nature, and the universal admirer of all Nature's productions;—but, as Sterne says, I am not celebrating the man, but the sentiment.

We are to have a fishing party next week, for the participation of which amusement, nature has disqualified me by a painful degree of sensibility; for I cannot call by the name of pleasure, what must be purchased at the high price of the suffering or death of any thing that exists. This was the first attaching feature my still-lamented Bramin discovered in my mental character. “You are,” said he, “Madam, a Christian by profession, but a Gentoo by nature; you would have done honour to the religion of Brumma.”—They refused me not, as I apprehended, a lock of this saint's hair, and I have had it elegantly set for his sake. He merited no less a compliment, in return for his unfeigned approbation of me.

It is got abroad, that we mean soon to leave Bengal; and here I have it, under the hand and seal

seal of one of my adorers, that broken constitutions, and broken hearts, will be the consequence of my departure; for that those who do not die of grief, will send themselves speedily to their graves by libations to Neptune for my safety. This, in your sober judgment, may be deemed carrying gallantry to excess; but there have been instances of facts to the full as extravagant, some years ago;—the Eastern world is, however, much improved, and their errors corrected.

A generation of European children (if you will give such an Irishism your passport, when you observe that I mean children born in the Eastern world) grow up daily, whose natural endowments are excellent, and their education wonderful for this distant land; so that, instead of languishing, as formerly, for European ladies, and receiving with rapture the hands of such as have the courage to brave all the perils of the ocean to obtain them a husband, and arrive with their credentials from the Company in their hands;—wives are now chosen, by men of nice feeling, from among these India-born ladies, (through natural intimacies, and a knowledge of their tempers, manners, and conduct) in preference to these adventurers. Yet is there no rule without an exception

ception—so that if you will be prevailed upon, Arabella, to make an East India voyage, I will engage a genius of my acquaintance, who has repeatedly celebrated my small merits, both in prose and verse, to present you a congratulatory address upon your arrival, and will ensure you a host of admirers.

You will, I fancy, be convinced by my trifling, I am no love-sick nymph—no, Arabella! so far from it, that though it is not unlikely I may marry Doyly, in obedience to my father's commands, you must do me the justice to acknowledge I bore his absence like a heroine, and seldom or ever made him the subject-matter of my letters to England. I have managed, however, to my father's satisfaction, and have taught myself to despise your malicious smiles;—yet, on recollection, before it is given me to embrace my Arabella, by being made the young man's lawful wife, it may be more for my credit to confess, than deny the tender sentiments with which he inspired me.

In Calcutta, I believe, Hymen is seldom known to be attended at the nuptial ceremony by Cupid (for it is who bids most that wins the prize); and
whilst

whilst the fair lady's person appertains to one happy man alone, her conversation is at the service of all those who have sufficient interest to get themselves introduced to her; and the husband is so complaisant as to ask no questions.

Yours, &c.

S. G.

LETTER

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LETTER XXXVII.

ALAS, Arabella, I am undone!—I have beheld so brilliant, so divine a spectacle—am so dazzled, and so captivated, and, like Gulliver in the land of Lilliput, find all the objects around me so diminutive and so mean, that I overlook and disregard them at every point. You will perceive, by this exordium, the Nabob has made his intended visit to the new Governor, and has carried off the heart of your unfortunate friend;—but I will endeavour to conquer and regulate my feelings.

From Chiptore (the Nabob's palace to Calcutta, I have already told you is four miles; from whence such a procession as I must never hope to behold again, proceeded to the Esplanade, and that at a very early hour in the morning.

His guards, on the occasion, were no less in number than his whole battalion of black troops, fine-looking fellows—and their complexions gave a grandeur to the scene. Their uniform and their
turbans

turbans were new, and their fire-arms glittering bright; and I would have given the world on the instant to have been a Nabobess, and entitled to so magnificent a train.

I whispered Doyly, and asked him, what he thought of the London fights in such a moment? He shook his head with due contempt, but made no reply, as we were surrounded by those who would have taken umbrage at the most distant reflection (though in the voice of truth) on England.

Seven elephants of the first magnitude were led by their keepers, in like manner as our sumpter-horses; seated on the back of one of which, on a throne of indescribable splendor, was his Nabobship, with a man behind him, holding a superb fan, in the very act of collecting the breezes in his service.

The throne was composed of gold, pearls, and brilliants, and the nabob's dress worth a sovereignty; nor was ever animal more grandly caparisoned than the no less honoured than exalted elephant on which he rode.

His state-palanquin followed, and was by much the most desirable object my eyes ever encountered,

tered, and differently built to those used by the Europeans. Four pillars of massy silver supporting the top, which was actually encrusted by pearls and diamonds; and, instead of verandas, fine glass plates on every side, as well as the back and front, to shew his Mightiness's person, I suppose, to the greatest advantage.

I was stationed nearly on a level with the throne as it passed along;—and judge, Arabella, if you can, of the ambitious throbs my heart experienced, when I saw the Nabob's eyes, sparkling with admiration, fixed on my face!—Doyle turned pale, and the procession advanced—yet were my charms unforgotten by him; for he twice or thrice looked back, and constituted me the envy of the women, and the torture of the men; in a word, my conquest was as evident as the noon-day sun: and who could dream of a mortal female's refusing an enthroned adorer, with the wealth of the Indies at his feet?

Down knelt the half-reasoning animal, at the entrance of the Governor's house, for his illustrious master to alight;—so powerful, yet so docile!—so gentle, yet so terrific in their appearance!

ance!—I am dying, Arabella, to have one of these very Elephants at my command.

Breakfast was prepared for this princely guest, at the [Governor's;—from whence he was conducted across the Esplanade, to the New Fort, where the troops were drawn out, to compliment him with an exhibition of their martial manœuvres;—and he was shewn, with apparent astonishment, to how great a distance bomb-shells can be thrown.—He was accompanied by the Governor's Aid-de-camp, the whole day—expressed much delight on viewing the camp at Bugee Bugee—but returned to Chiptore to dinner, the peculiar customs of his religion not admitting of his mixing with the Europeans, on that occasion. Many of the officers were invited to his palace, and sumptuously entertained, in an adjoining apartment; and in the evening, some beautiful fire-works were played off in the garden of Chiptore—and the company returned much satisfied with his liberal and courteous demeanour.

I thought of Lady Wortley Montague's account of her being noticed by the Grand Seignor, when spectator of a Turkish procession, on the Nabob's observation of me;—but there was this difference

difference between the circumstances—namely, that the attention the Sultan paid that Lady was merely *en passant*; whereas this Nabob of Nabobs proved, in the face of all the people, how long he bore me in mind—that is, how deeply he was wounded—and I hold myself in expectance of hearing more of him.

The return of the procession was with the same ceremonies—and I have dreamed alone of state palanquins, thrones, elephants, and scapoys, ever since.

My friends, who visited the Fort, and traced the Nabob's steps wherever he went, tell me, a ship now on the stocks, at Watson's Works, of three decks (the first ever built at Calcutta) will be launched in a few days, and receive the name of the Earl Cornwallis, in honour of our Governor.—It will, no doubt, be a brilliant day;—but whether it will be thought safe to trust me to be a spectator, or not, lest the Nabob should form plans for carrying me off, is uncertain, until I have heard the opinion of my male friends. That Doyly was frightened, is most certain;—but an Englishwoman was not born to fear giant knights, or enchanted castles; and the more especially, where an army would stand forth in her protection

tection and defence. It would flatter my vanity to find them alarmed.—Ha! ha! ha! Arabella—did you ever imagine your friend would make so magnificent a conquest?—Poor Doyly, how small he has felt himself ever since!—Forgive my folly—I recollect my Bramin, and am myself again.

I am affectionately, your's

S. G.

LETTER

LETTER XXXVIII.

BLESS me, Arabella, how different objects can appear to different optics!—My father talks of nothing but going to England, or Doyly but of becoming a bridegroom.—“Softly, my dear Sir,” said I to him, “for there are a few preliminary articles to be adjusted, before that great event can take place.—If my father marries not in India, I will follow his example; and so, if you chuse to make it a concern of yours, get him to appoint his day, and that, I promise you, shall be mine.”

We shall be a fine party of us, in crossing the ocean;—for, Mr. and Mrs. Hartly, and the children, Mrs. Rider, and young Mr. and Mrs. D——, will accompany us;—letters having arrived, that require Mr. Hartly’s personal attendance in England, and he will not leave his family behind.

Mrs.

Mrs. D—— has been reproaching me, in the severest terms, for my treatment of Doyly.—Unkind Mrs. D——! I never thought it possible for you to chide in so serious a manner.—She says I shall distress my father beyond measure, by requiring what cannot be complied with.

“And why not, Mrs. D——,” said I, interrupting her, “why not, I beseech you?—If a union is to take place between my father and you, wherefore should you embark for England previous thereto?—or, if it can be necessary to observe such delay, why should you set yourself in array against a compliment I propose making you, ~~if~~ delaying my nuptials also, until the air of my native country gives me sufficient resolution to constitute Mr. Doyly my sovereign lord?—Methinks he shews great impatience to assume the husband.”

MR.

Mrs. D——— walked off in great state—the first fit of the pouts I have ever seen her fall into; and who will give the second lecture on the subject, I am at a loss to conjecture.—Perhaps your eloquent little friend, my intended—you understand me, Arabella—but I shall not allow it lawful for him to plead in his own cause.—His reports will be so partial, his representations so—Ah, Arabella, I hear my father ask for me!—what will become of me?

I have great powers, my good girl—and I stood in need of their utmost exertion, when opposed, as they have been, to Mrs. D———'s best performance. I acknowledge her to be a great actress, and only inferior to your friend, who has carried her point, to all intents and purposes; and not a word more is to be mentioned—until the Padra receives his instructions to fill his purse in our service.—I do not suppose, Arabella, that the evening will be worth less to him than 500 gold mohrs.

O

You

You will, perhaps, think I treat the subject very gayly.—I do—in order to keep my mind clear of melancholy thoughts. The dear woman, that is now a saint in heaven, approves the work I have accomplished; and I am teaching myself to forget the grave, and look for her only in the bright regions of eternity.

On which account, it has been determined, no one of us shall visit the spot where her earthly remains are lodged. Mrs. Hartly affirms, it is flying in the face of Providence, to neglect the practice of resignation; and Mrs. D——'s speaking silence seems to claim that respect from us, no language could have engaged for her. Sentimental sorrow as Dr. Johnson calls it, is, I am now satisfied, the bane of happiness, in a wider degree than the worst evil under the sun, which that refinement is prompted to resist; inasmuch, that I hope you will find we have benefited by our voyage.

There are monsters, Arabella, in human shapes, and the Eastern world is (what I should have returned

turned without conceiving it to be, but for the incident of this morning) the scene of tragedies that dishonour mankind.—I have, within the passing hour, beheld one of these wretches conveyed to prison—and may condign punishment be his portion!

He is, my dear, an officer in the army—who having, in some of his country rides, discovered an old man's daughter to be lovely beyond whatever this country has produced, cruelly and basely resolved to rob him of her. To her father's house he went, on this diabolical design, and was received by its innocent and unsuspecting inhabitants with the utmost kindness;—in consequence of which reception, he changed his plan of outrage—and, instead of bearing her off, as he had intended, he settled it to violate the laws of hospitality—of God and of man—and accomplish his work of darkness under the paternal roof!

To win her, he found impossible—he therefore had recourse to violence; and, when the poor old man, terrified by his daughter's cries, advanced to her assistance, he shot him dead before his child's eyes; and then proceeded to fill up the measure of his iniquity. Yes! Arabella! the man whose profession it was to protect, thus

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brutally and barbarously destroyed!—May his name be branded with infamy!—and his death be equally unpitied and ignominious.—I now rejoice, more than ever, that I am about to leave a country, where fiend-like acts are, I fear, much oftener perpetrated than detected; for, the grave complains not, and gold can unnerve the arm of justice.—Lord C—— will not, however, strain his noble deeds, by suffering such a villain to escape; and the facts I have related are too well known, and too glaringly confirmed, to be palliated, or atoned by less than the life of him who could devise deeds of such turpitude; or, when even devised, could have the savage nature to carry them into effect.—I am all indignation, terror, compassion, and agitation:—the young woman survives, however, to appal the guilty wretch by her melancholy testimony.

We embark, Arabella, within the hour I am now devoting to my pen; and few evenings, I should

should suppose, produced more weddings, than took place, three evenings ago at Hartly House. Yes, Arabella, I have been three days a wife; and so abundantly are my family connections enlarged, that I have a mother I am proud to acknowledge, and sisters and brothers, in consequence of my change of condition; for the sister of Mrs. Hartly is now Mrs. D——'s daughter, and inclination will convert an alliance into the ties of relationship, beyond legal claims:—and, Arabella, I bring over with me the man I have chosen for your husband, the celebrated Beville of our Calcutta theatre,—Be propitious, ye gales; let not so much happiness be the prey of disaster!—But remember, Arabella, for your consolation, should we all be buried in the deep, that Providence has a right to dispose of us at will; and that, however unable mortals are to penetrate Heaven's design, every seeming misfortune is a disguised blessing, to those who possess rectitude of heart and uprightness of conduct: such are kindly
sheltered,

sheltered, by what is called a violent death, from the approaching, though unseen miseries of existence.

A thousand times farewell !

S. D.

LETTER

LETTER XXXIX.

Portsmouth.

WE are all landed safe at this place, after a tedious, though not hazardous voyage.—The addition of your company is ardently wished by every individual of the party to which I belong. Meet us then at Guildford, and augment the happiness of your own

SOPHIA DOYLY.

THE END.

LETTER

W
I am so situated that I am unable to
attend, though not having any objection
to your company, I am sorry to be
unable to attend of the party to which I belong. I am
as usual in California, and suggest the propriety
of your own

Sophia Dorr



THE END